

ANDHAKA

Blind and preposterously ugly, Andhaka's life was yet filled with love. Then Lord Brahma gave him eyes and beauty, and he became a proud tyrant who refused to see the truth. But Andhaka was the son of Shiva, after all, and even Indra, Vishnu and Brahma wished him no harm. Eventually, it was Shiva's firm hand that led him back to happiness.

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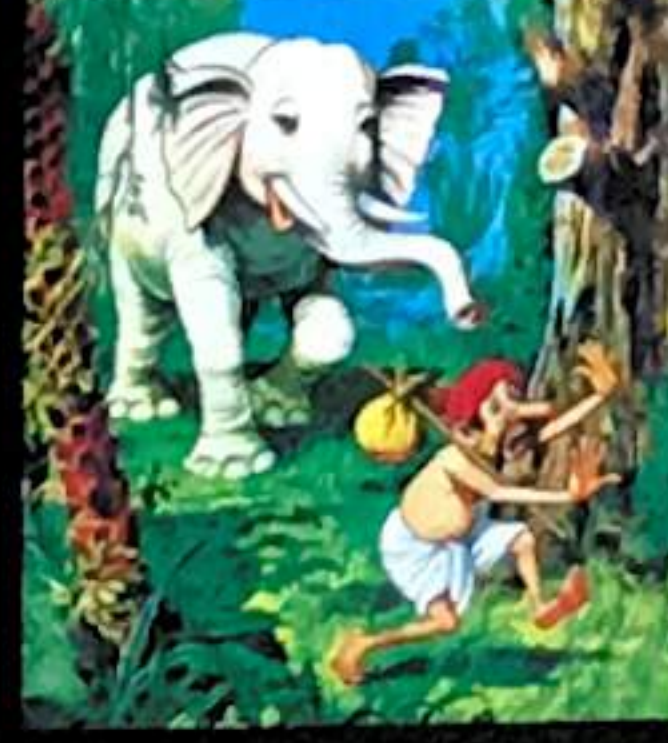
BRAVEHEARTS

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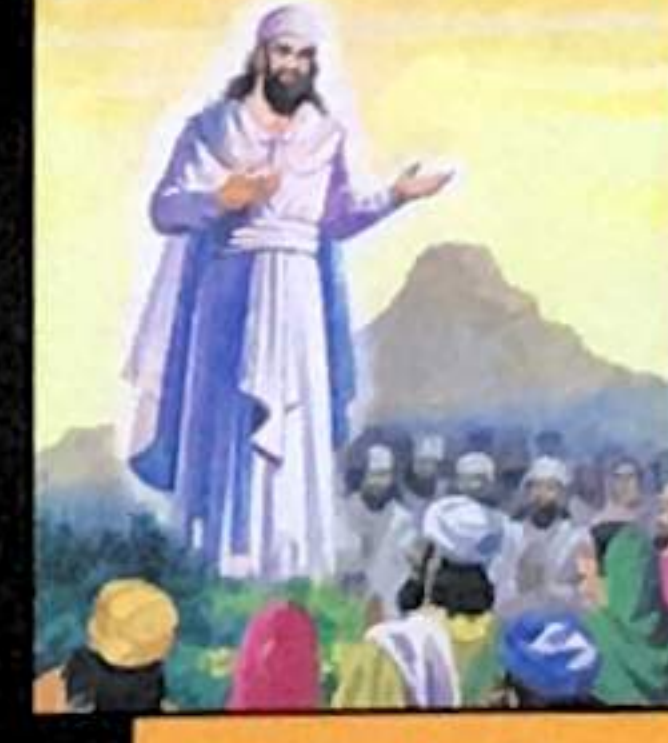
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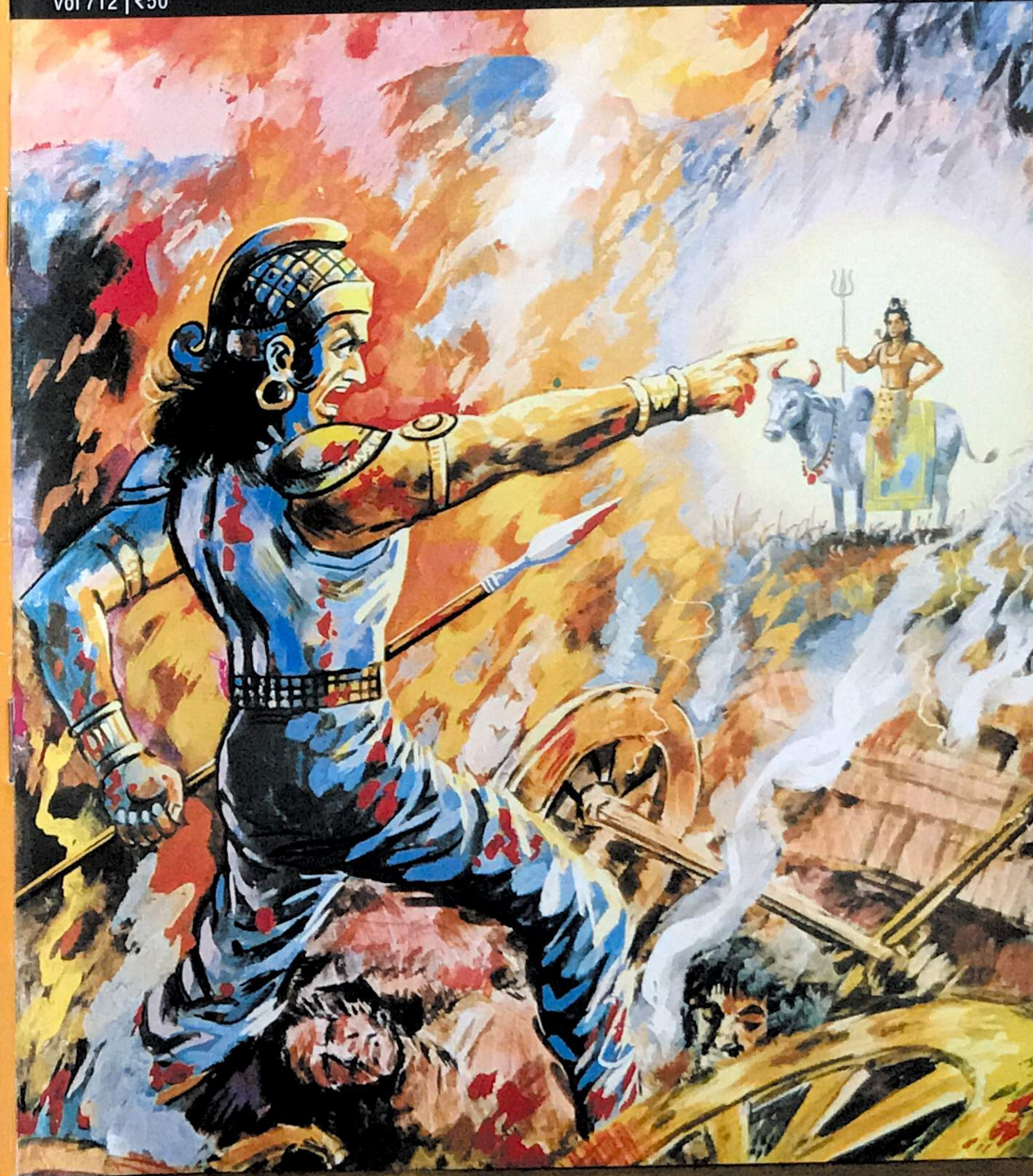
EPICS &
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ANDHAKA

THE DARK LORD WHO SAW LIGHT

Vol 712 | ₹50

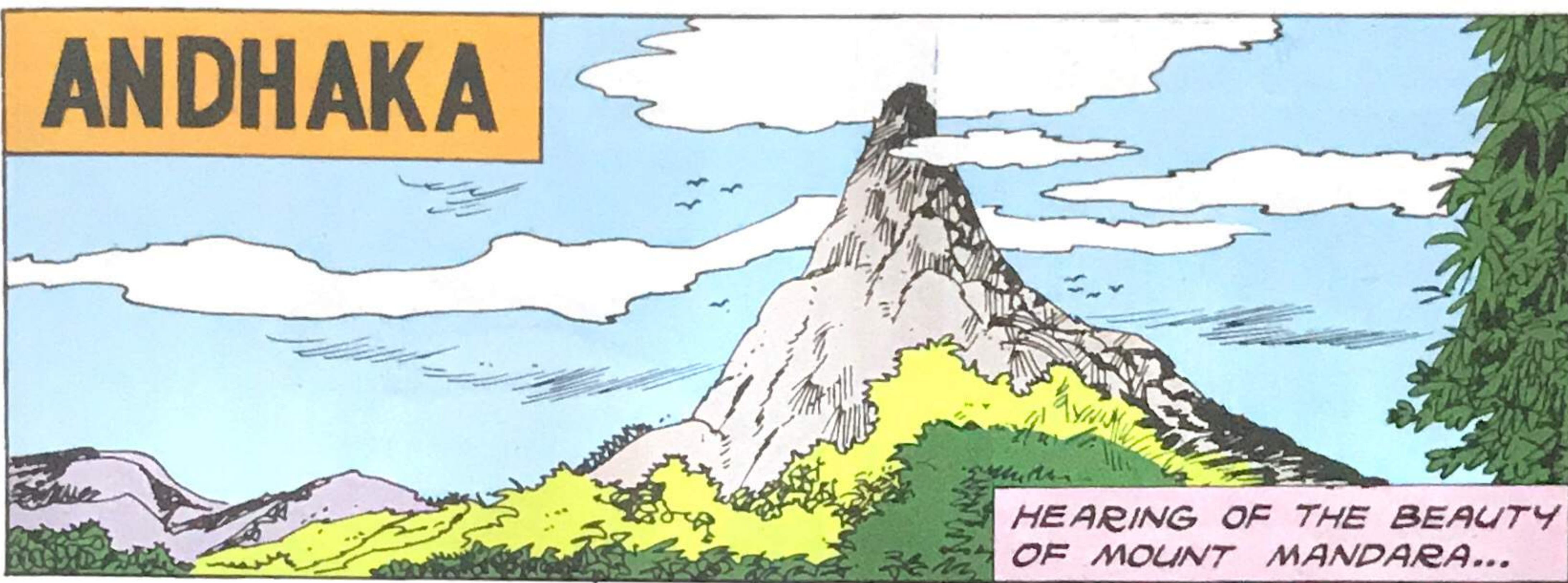


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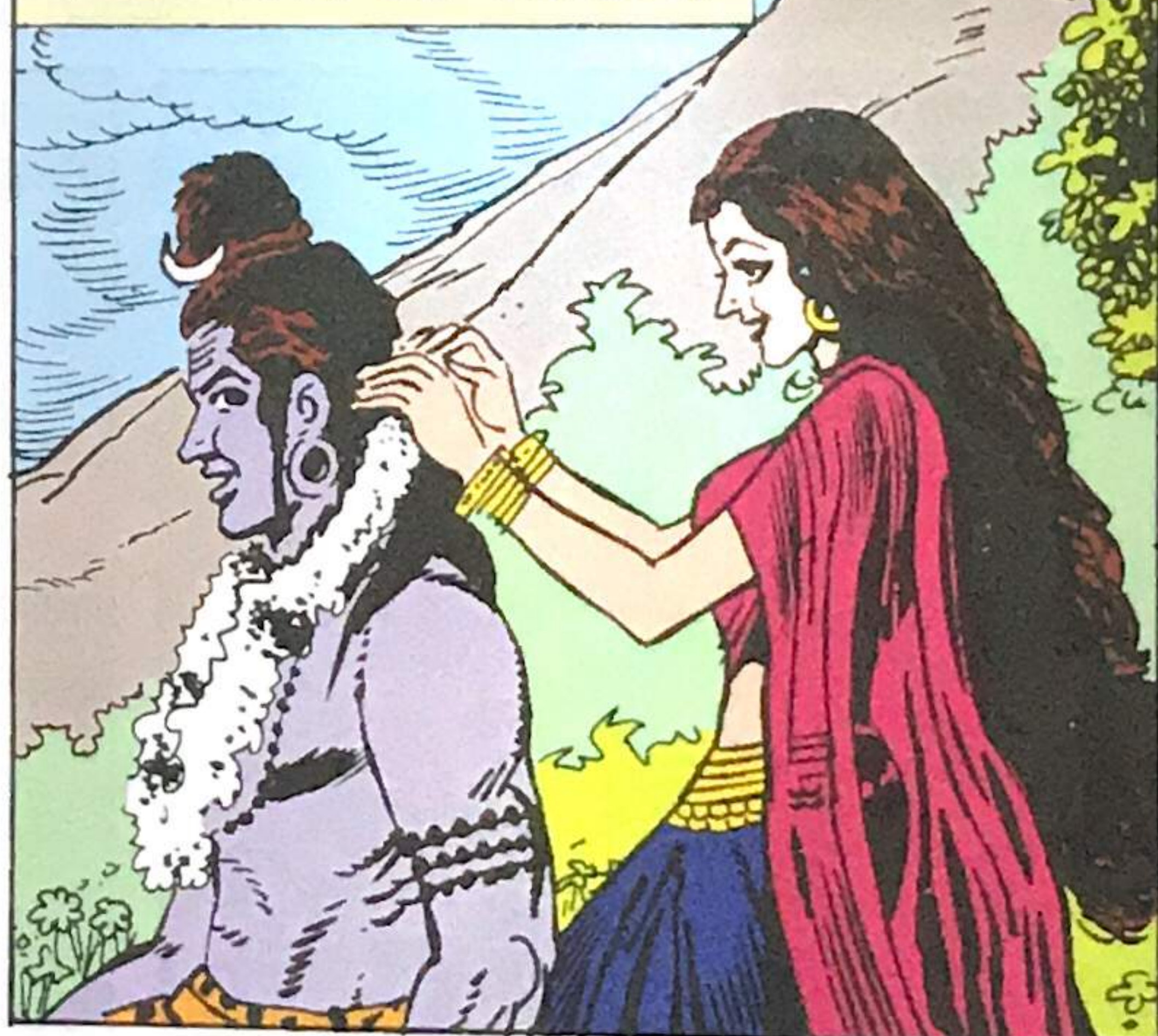
ANDHAKA



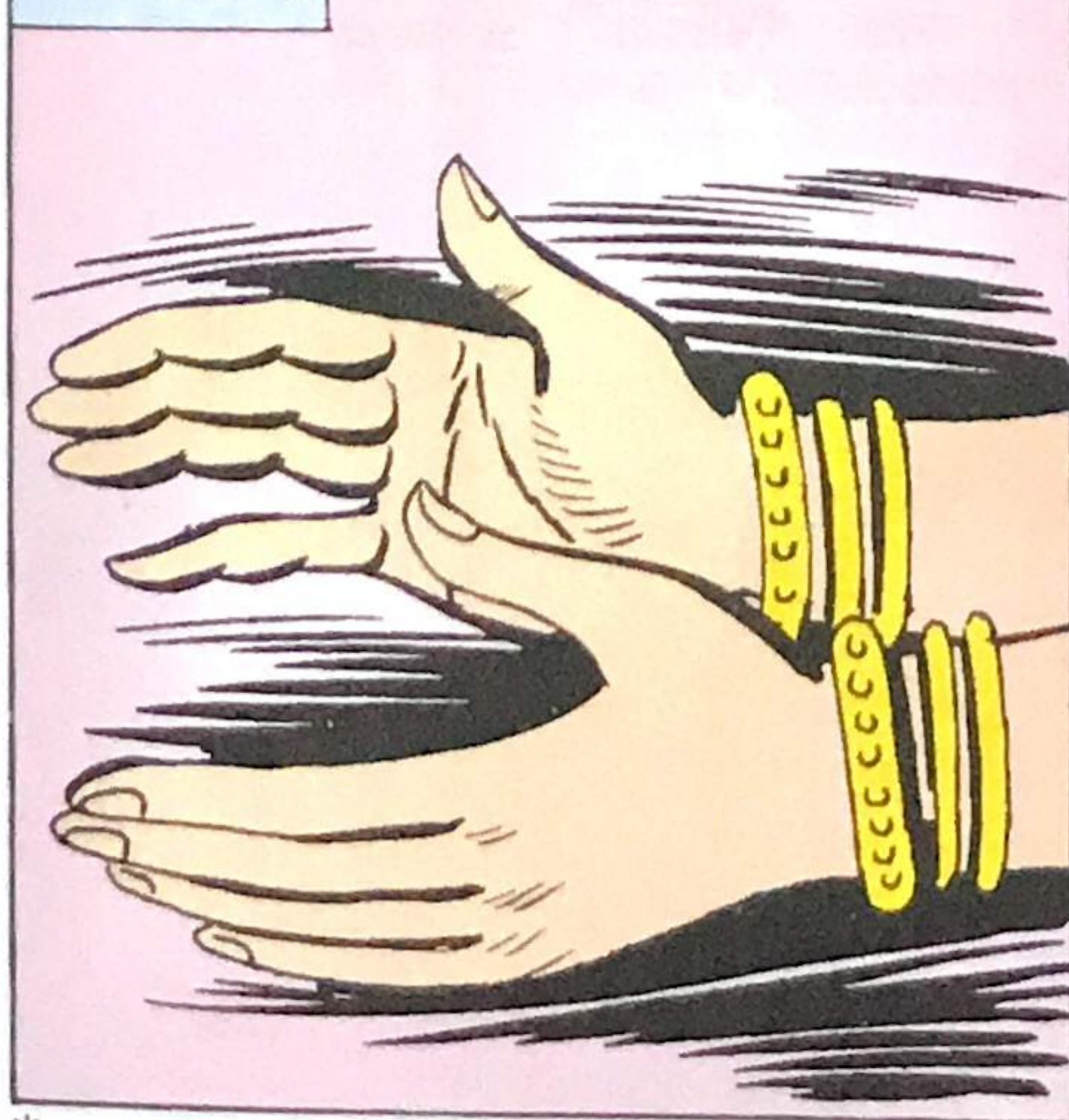
...LORD SHIVA CAME THERE WITH HIS WIFE, PARVATI, AND HIS GANAS*.



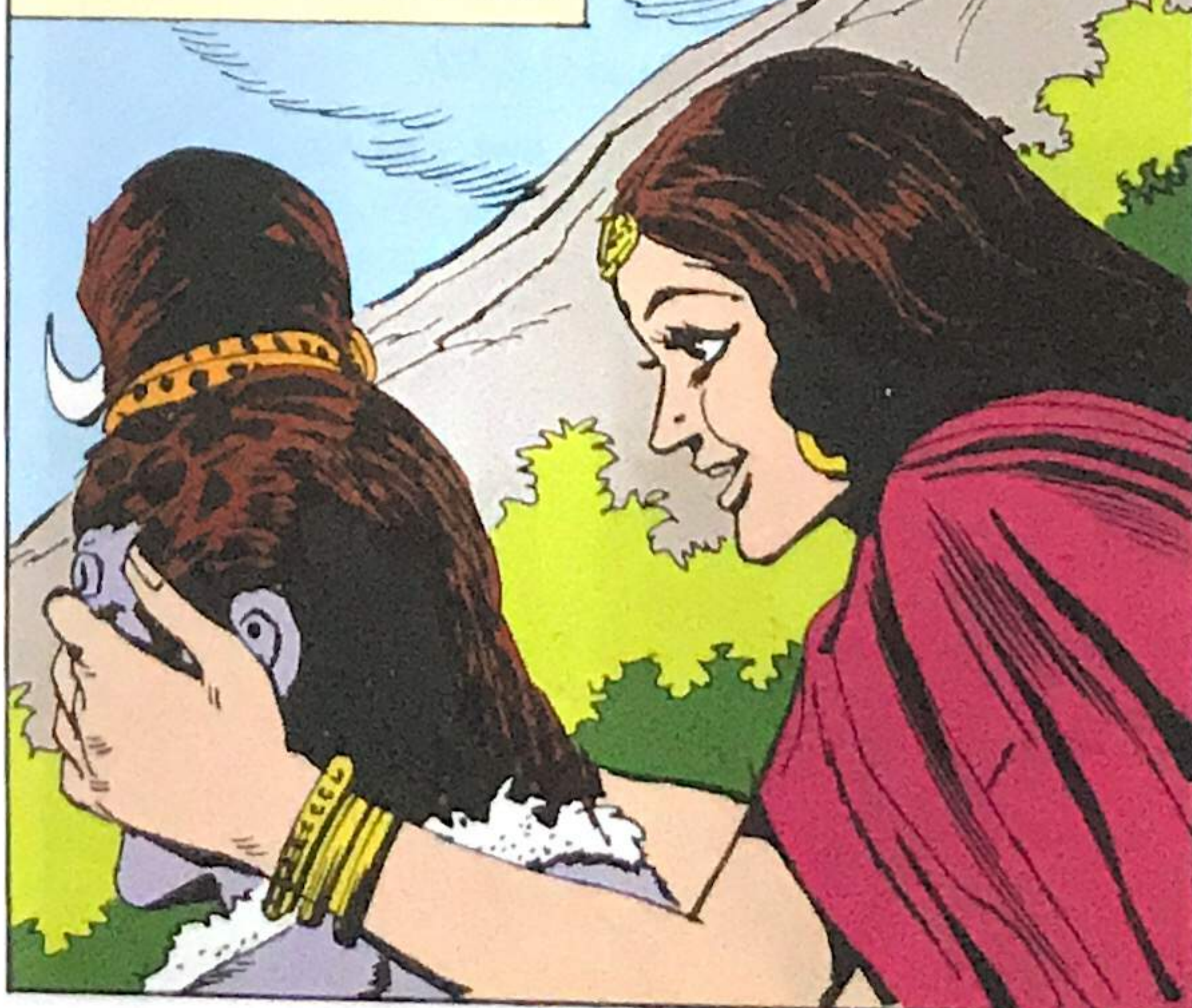
ONE DAY WHEN PARVATI WAS IN A PLAYFUL MOOD...



...SHE BROUGHT FORWARD HER HANDS...



...AND COVERED ALL THREE OF SHIVA'S EYES.

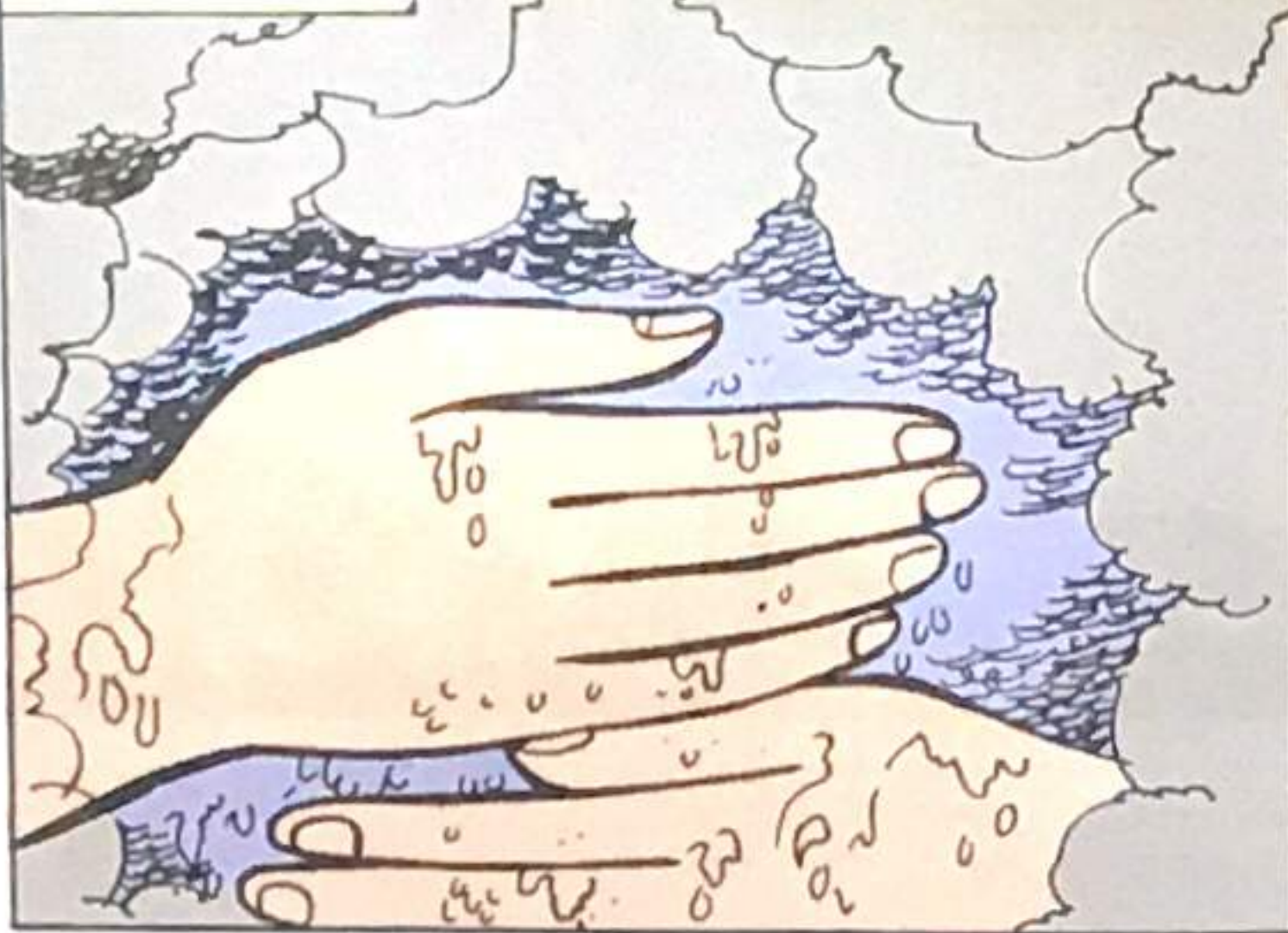


* ATTENDANTS

AT ONCE, THE WORLD WAS PLUNGED INTO DARKNESS.



HELD OVER THE FIERY THIRD EYE OF SHIVA, PARVATI'S HANDS BEGAN TO PERSPIRE.



THE PERSPIRATION FLOWED OUT AND FELL UPON THE GROUND...



...AND SUDDENLY, THERE ROSE FROM IT A WEIRD BEING.



AS PARVATI STARED AT IT, THE OMNISCIENT SHIVA SMILED.



MY DEAR, IT IS YOU WHO CLOSED MY EYES, SO THIS IS YOUR WORK.

AT THIS PARVATI SMILED AND UNCOVERED SHIVA'S EYES.



IN THE RETURNING LIGHT, THE CREATURE LOOKED MORE HORRIBLE THAN BEFORE.



MY LORD, WHAT IS THIS HIDEOUS THING BEFORE US?



IT IS OUR SON, DEAR ONE... BORN OF THE SWEAT OF YOUR HAND AND THE HEAT OF MY EYE.

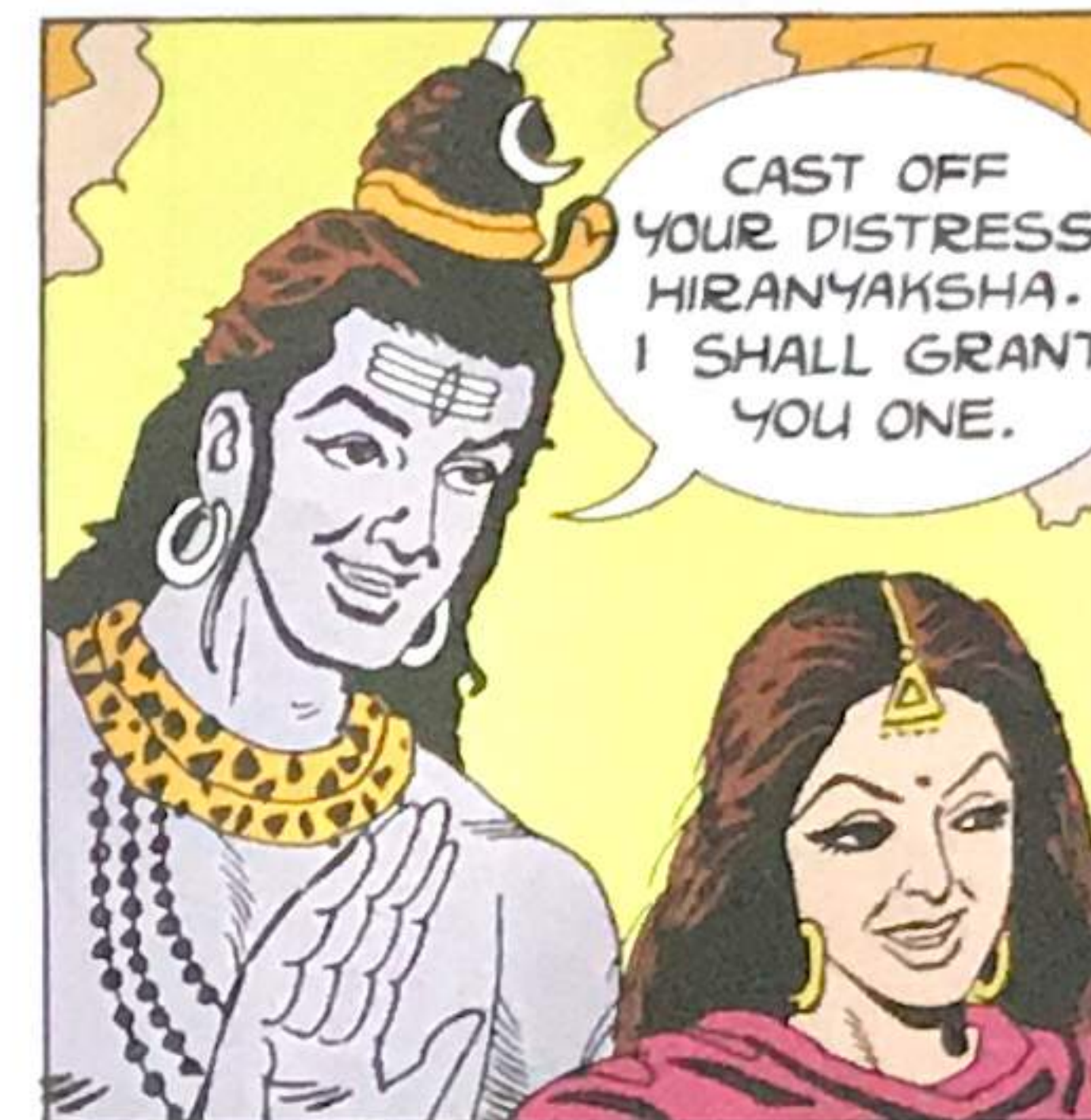
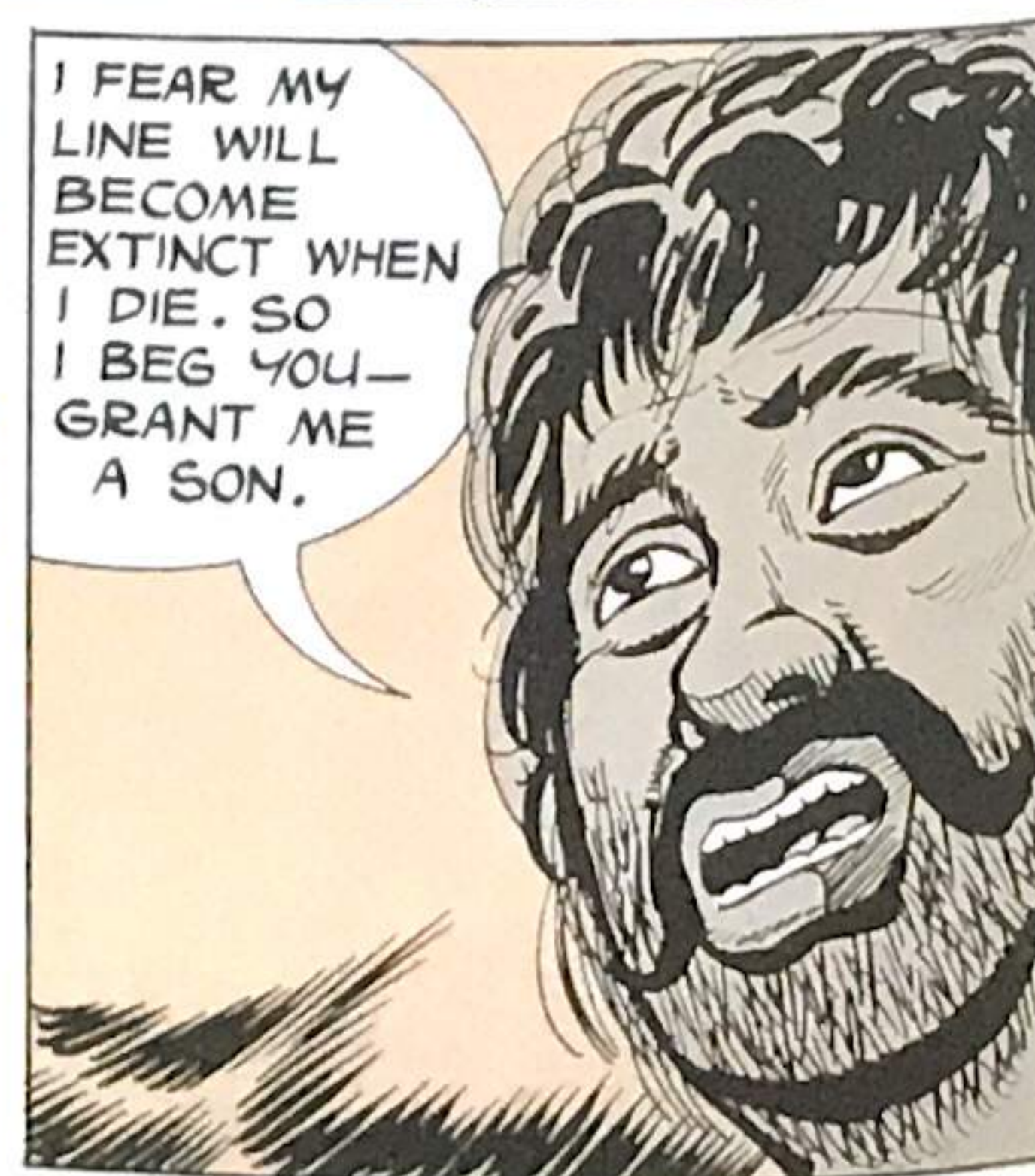
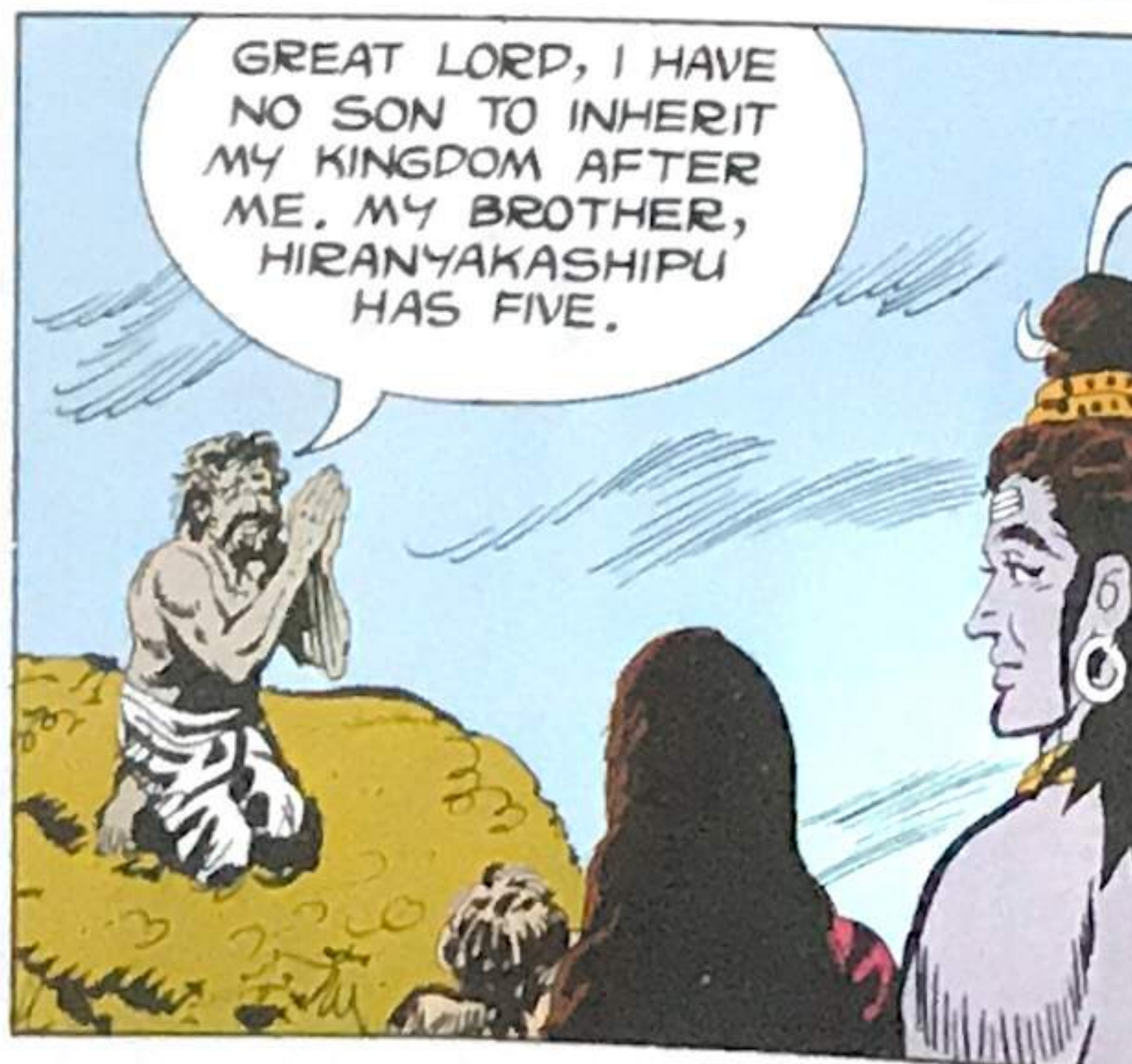
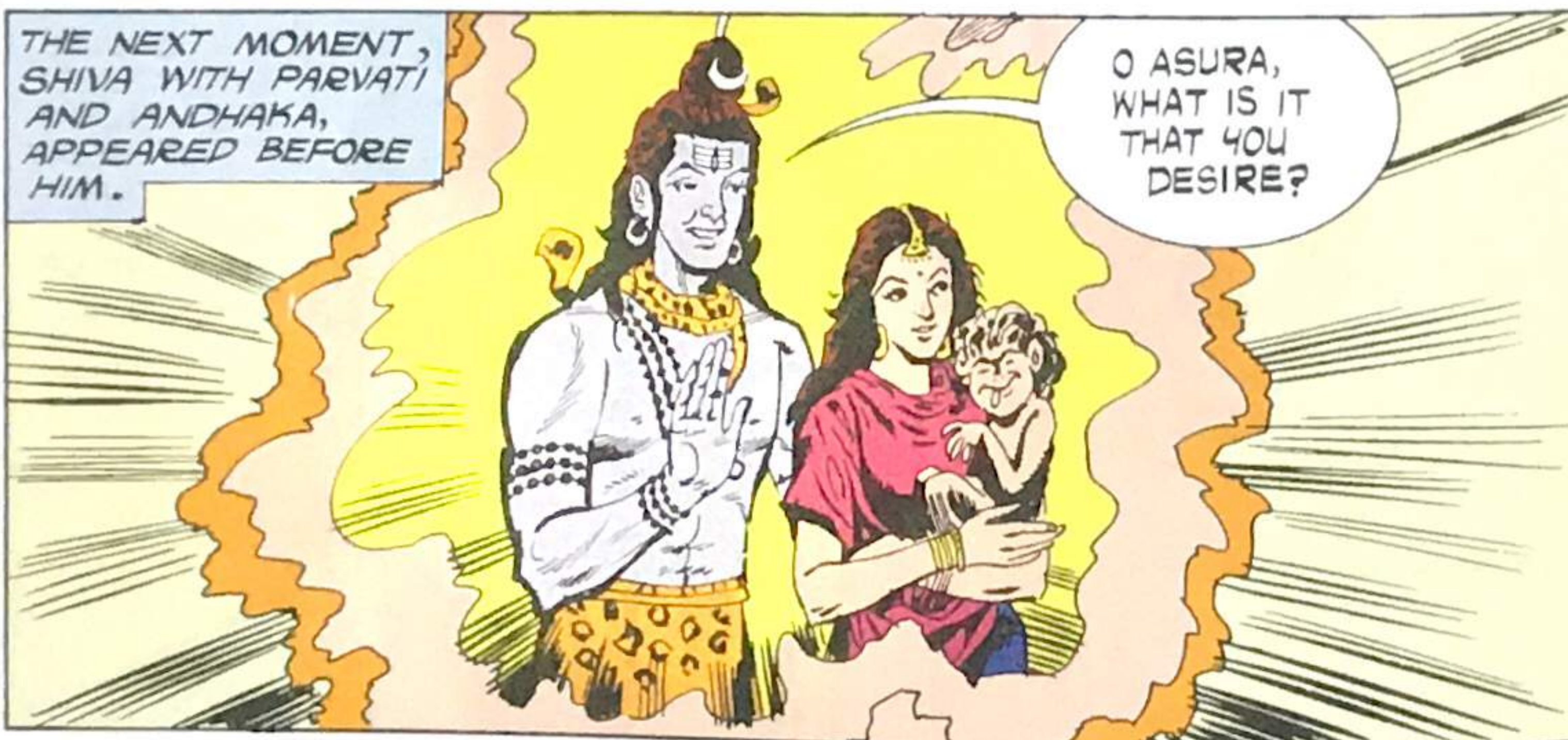
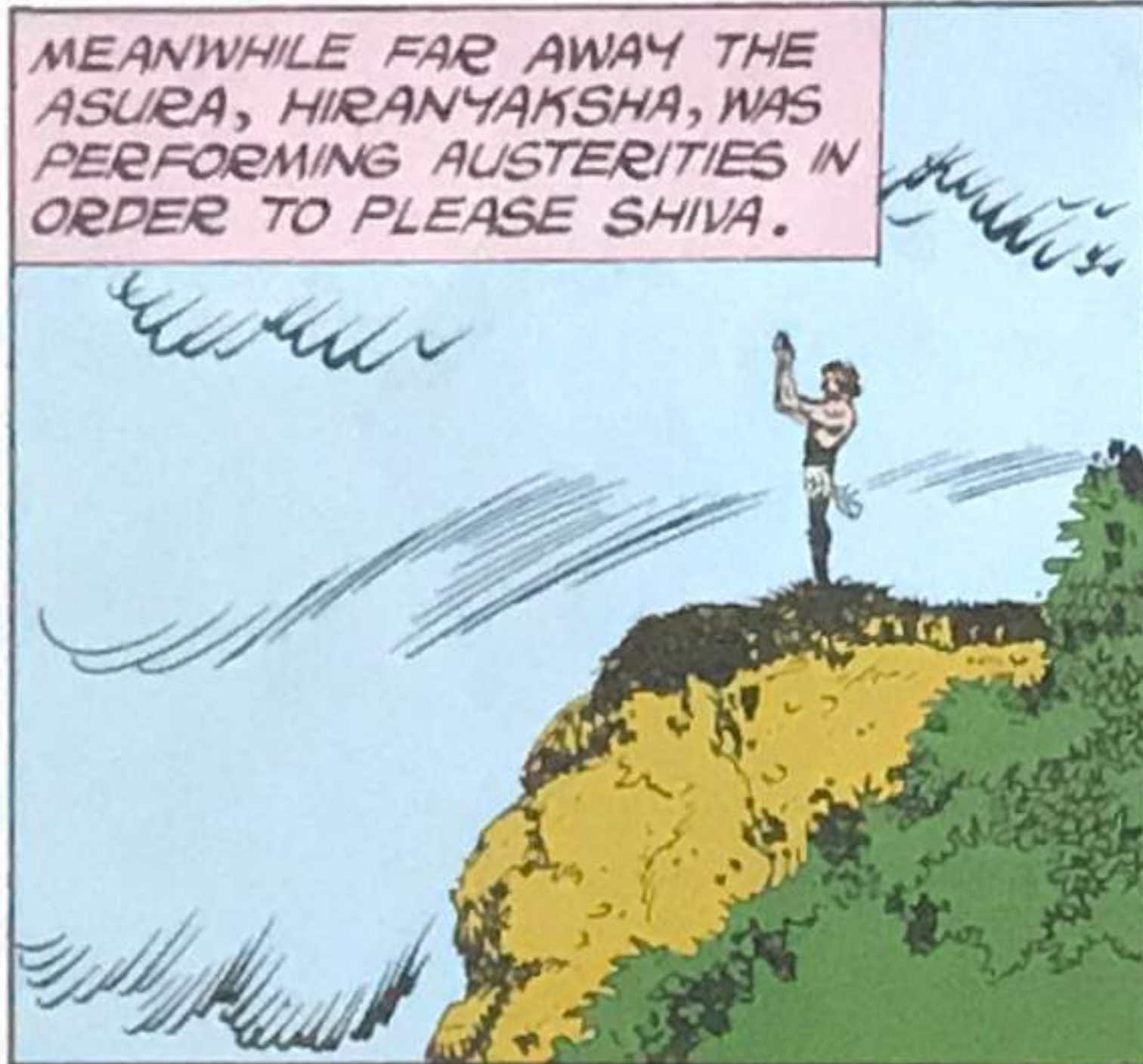
BORN IN DARKNESS, HE SHALL BE CALLED ANDHAKA, THE BLIND ONE. AS HE IS YOUR SON, YOU MUST CARE FOR HIM.



I WILL DO SO, MY LORD.

AND THE COMPASSIONATE PARVATI BEGAN TO LOOK AFTER ANDHAKA.







HAVING GAINED SHIVA'S FAVOUR, HIRANYAKSHA GREW ARROGANT. HE LAUNCHED A CAMPAIGN TO CONQUER THE THREE WORLDS...



...STRIKING FEAR INTO THE HEARTS OF THE DEVAS.

THIS EVIL ASURA WILL BE THE END OF US ALL.



IN DESPERATION, THE DEVAS WENT TO SEEK THE AID OF LORD VISHNU.

DO NOT BE DISTRESSED. I SHALL AT ONCE RID THE WORLD OF HIRANYAKSHA.



LORD VISHNU TRANSFORMED HIMSELF INTO VARAHA, THE MIGHTY BOAR...



...AND PUT TO ROUT THE ARMIES OF HIRANYAKSHA.



THEN IN HIS TRUE FORM, VISHNU USING HIS SUDARSHAN CHAKRA...

...PUT AN END TO THE ASURA'S LIFE.



LATER, HE BLESSED ANDHAKA...

...AND MADE HIM KING OF THE ASURAS.



BUT ANDHAKA'S ENVIOUS COUSINS COULD NOT BEAR TO SEE HIM ON THE THRONE. THEY BEGAN TO TAUNT HIM.

WHAT KIND OF KING WILL YOU BE - BLIND AS YOU ARE?



OUR UNCLE WAS A FOOL TO HAVE ADOPTED A BLIND FELLOW.



ANYWAY, WHAT CLAIM HAVE YOU TO THE KINGDOM OF ONE WHO WAS NOT YOUR REAL FATHER?



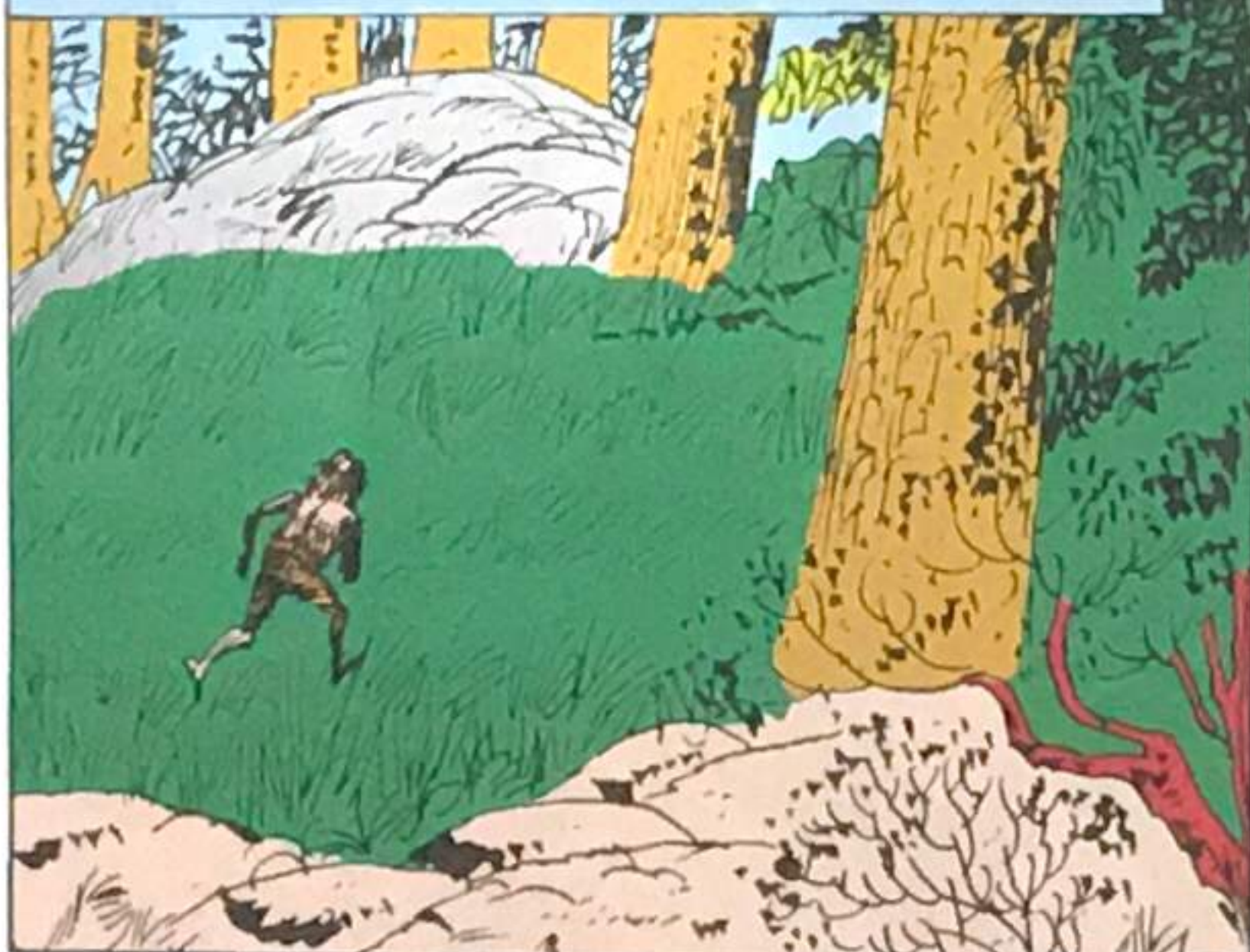
ONE OF US SHALL BE KING. WE HAVE DECIDED.

HELPLESS AGAINST THE ONSLAUGHT, ANDHAKA BEGAN TO THINK.



IF ONLY THERE WAS SOME WAY TO BECOME OTHER THAN WHAT I AM. YES... I KNOW HOW.

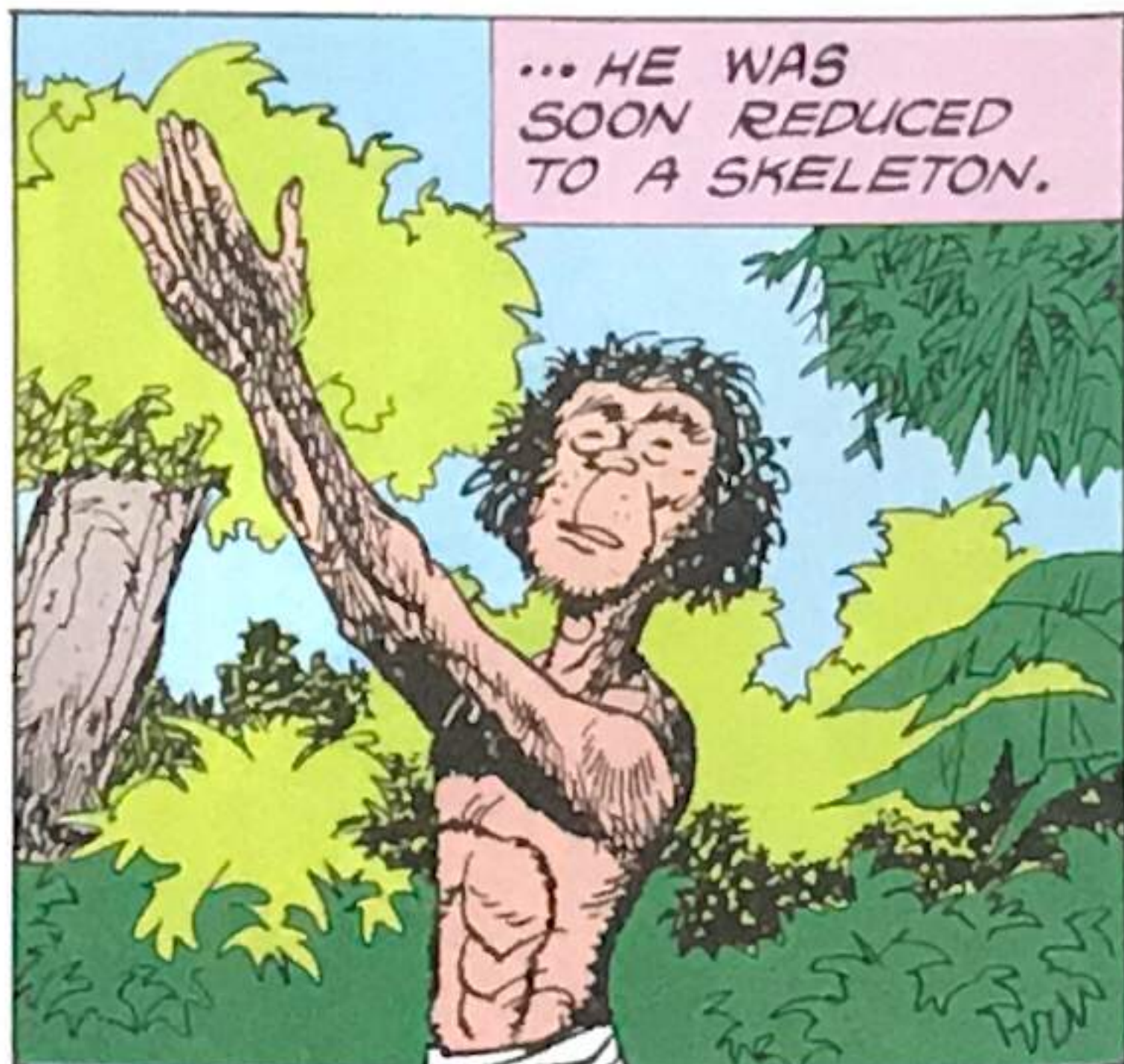
AND ONE DARK NIGHT, ANDHAKA WENT INTO THE DEPTHS OF A FOREST.



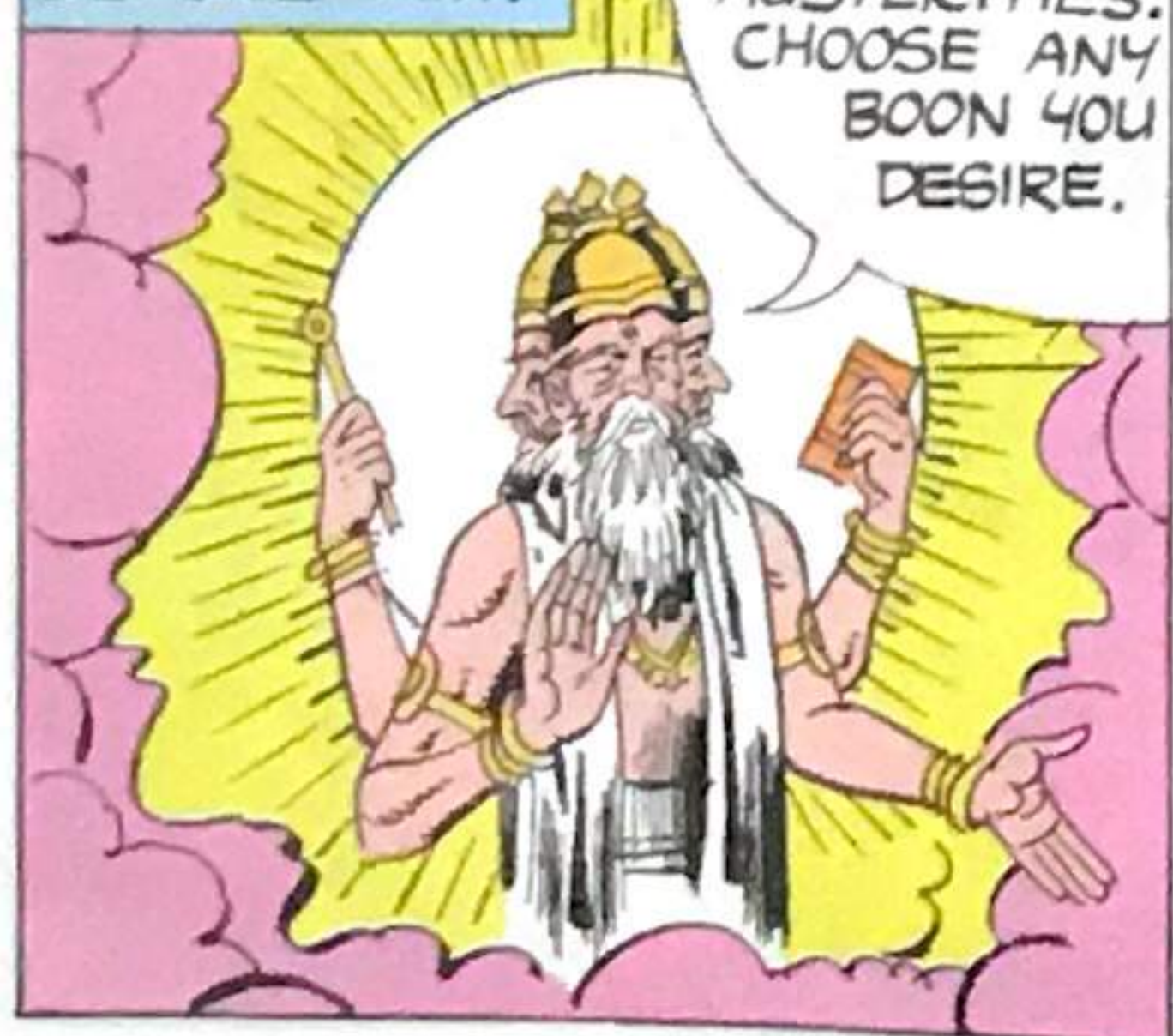
IN THAT DESOLATE PLACE, HE BEGAN TO DO PENANCE, STANDING ON ONE LEG, WITH ARMS RAISED...



... HE WAS SOON REDUCED TO A SKELETON.

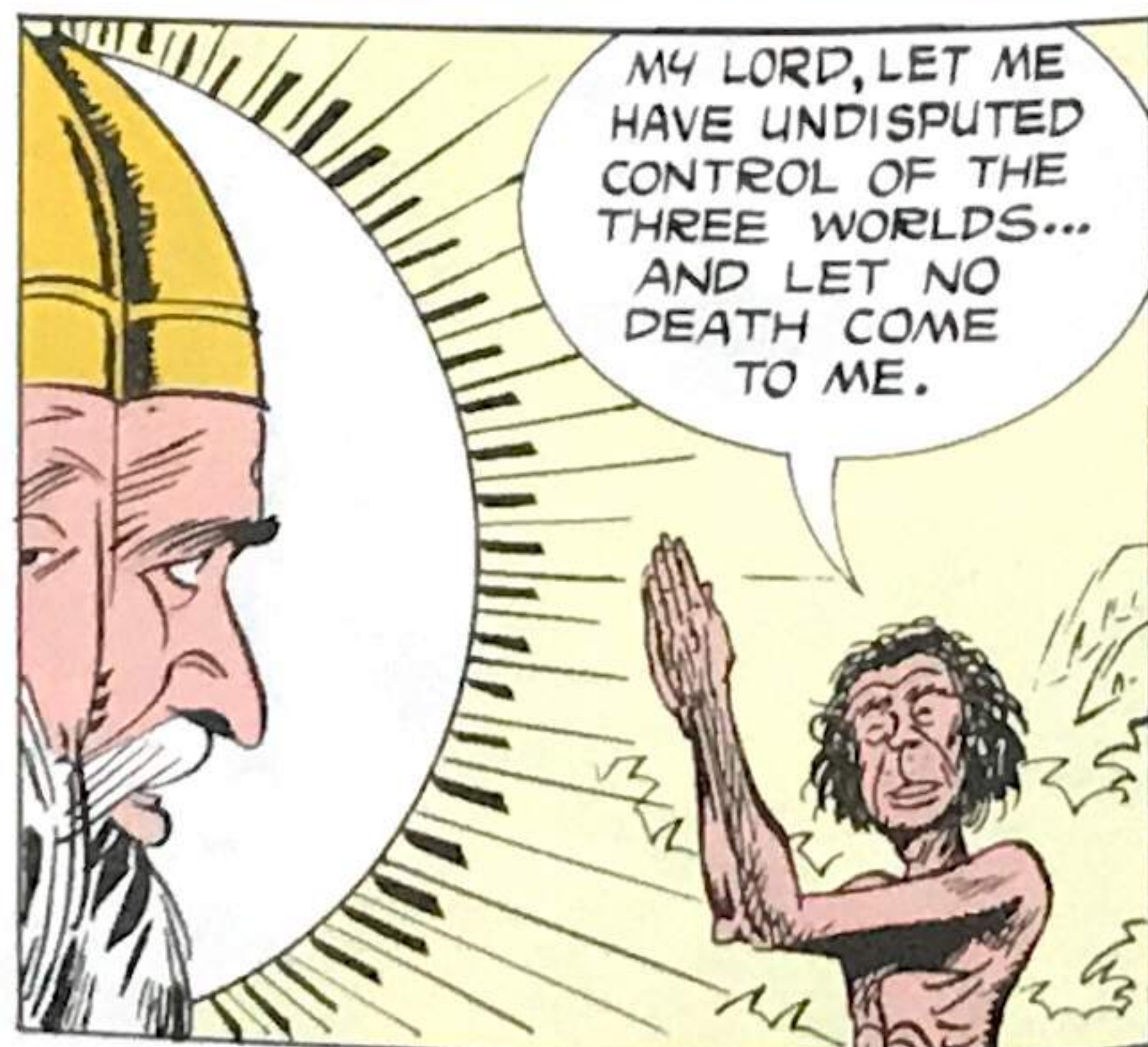


AT LAST, LORD BRAHMA APPEARED BEFORE HIM.



O ASURA, CEASE YOUR TERRIBLE AUSTERITIES. CHOOSE ANY BOON YOU DESIRE.

MY LORD, LET ME HAVE UNDISPUTED CONTROL OF THE THREE WORLDS... AND LET NO DEATH COME TO ME.



YOU SHALL BECOME LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS. BUT WHOEVER IS BORN MUST DIE. YOU MAY HOWEVER CHOOSE THE MANNER OF YOUR DEATH.



THEN, LET THE MOST EXCELLENT OF WOMEN IN THE WORLD, WHATEVER HER AGE, BE LIKE A MOTHER TO ME...



...AND SHOULD I LOOK UPON HER AS ANYTHING BUT MOTHER, LET DESTRUCTION BEFALL ME INSTANTLY.



BRAHMA WAS SURPRISED AT THIS REQUEST, BUT HE SMILED.

O FOREMOST OF ASURAS, WHATEVER YOU HAVE DESIRED SHALL BE YOURS. REALIZE YOUR AMBITION. BUT ALWAYS FIGHT WITH HEROIC PERSONS.





SIGHTLESS AND SKELETAL AS I AM NOW, HOW CAN I FIGHT MY FOES? REST YOUR HEALING HAND UPON ME, GREAT LORD.



BRAHMA TOUCHED ANDHAKA...



... AND, AT ONCE, ANDHAKA BECAME FULL-BODIED, HANDSOME AND STRONG...



... AND GAINED THE PRECIOUS GIFT OF VISION.



THE TRANSFORMED ANDHAKA THEN RETURNED TO HIS PALACE.

COUSINS, IT IS I! ANDHAKA!

ANDHAKA? SURELY A BLESSED BOON HAS GIVEN YOU BOTH SIGHT AND THIS BEAUTIFUL FORM.

AWED BY HIS NEWFOUND VIGOUR AND BEAUTY, HIS COUSINS OFFERED NO RESISTANCE AND HE BECAME KING OF THE NETHERWORLD.



BUT LIKE HIS FOSTER-FATHER, ANDHAKA TOO BEGAN TO CRAVE FOR POWER AND MORE POWER.

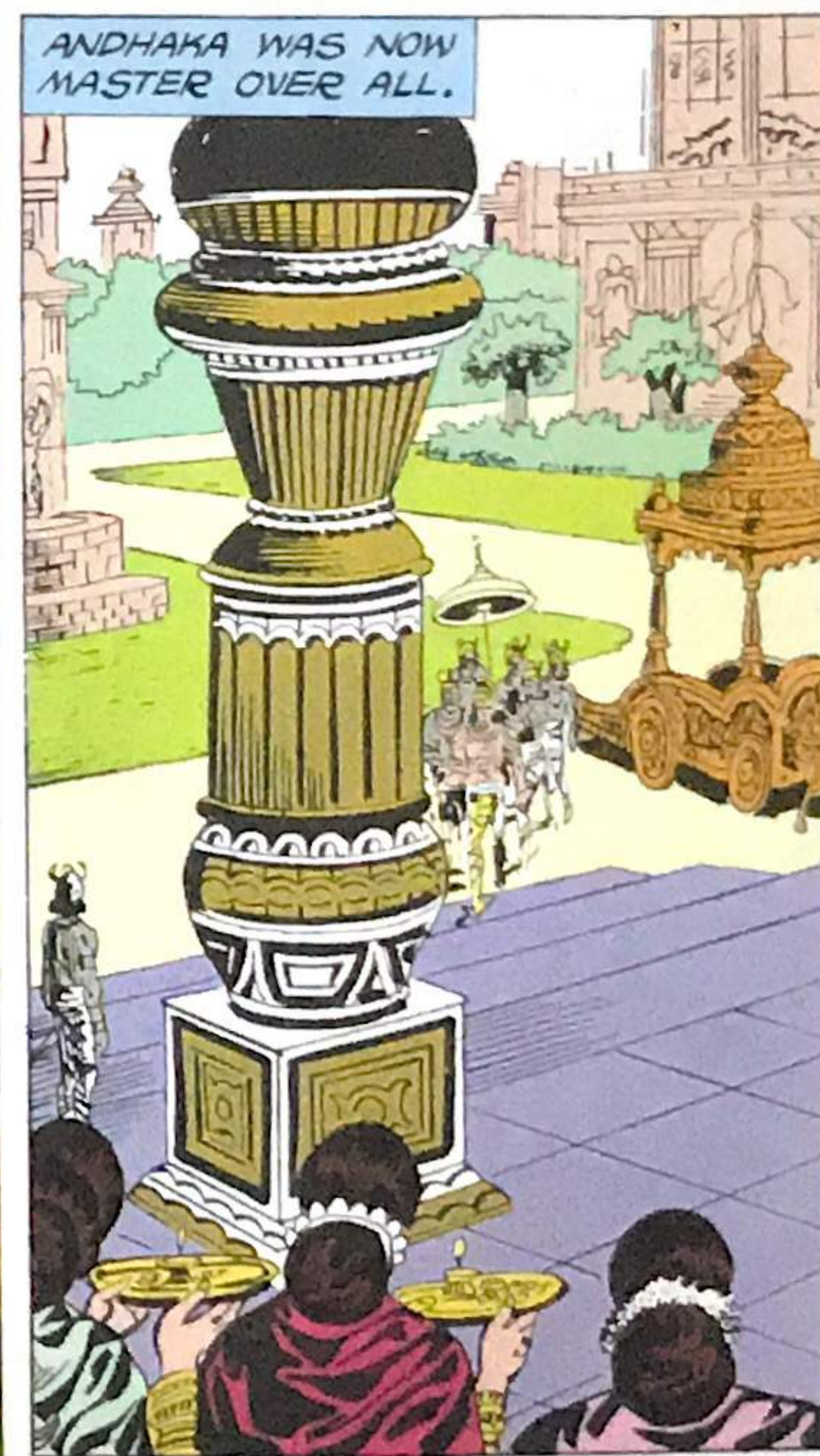


I WILL NOT REST TILL I AM LORD OF EARTH AND HEAVEN.

HE SET OUT FROM HIS NETHER REALM AND BEFORE LONG CONQUERED THE EARTH AND THEN HEAVEN.

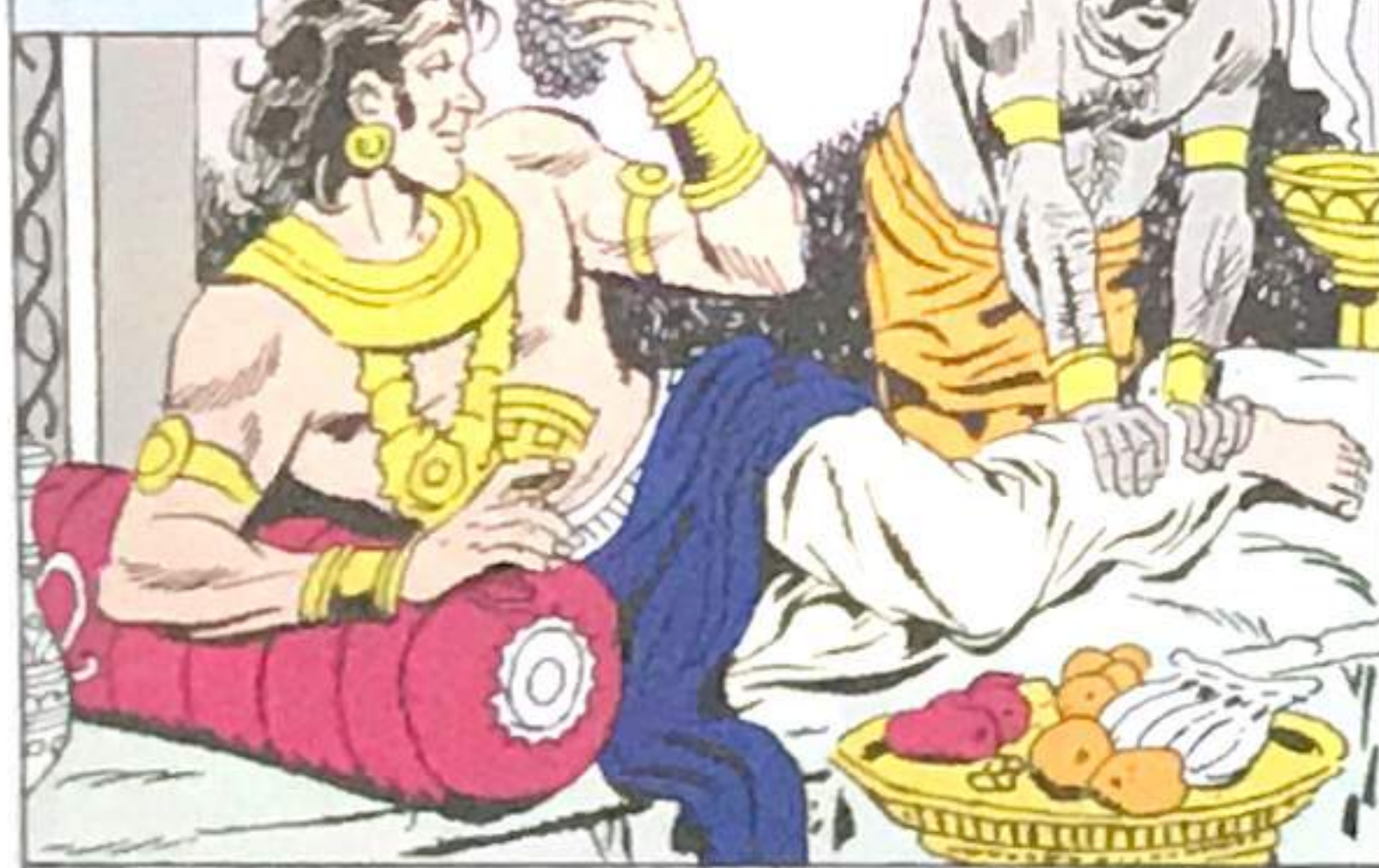


INDRA, YOU AND THE DEVAS SHALL PAY ME TRIBUTE FROM NOW ON.

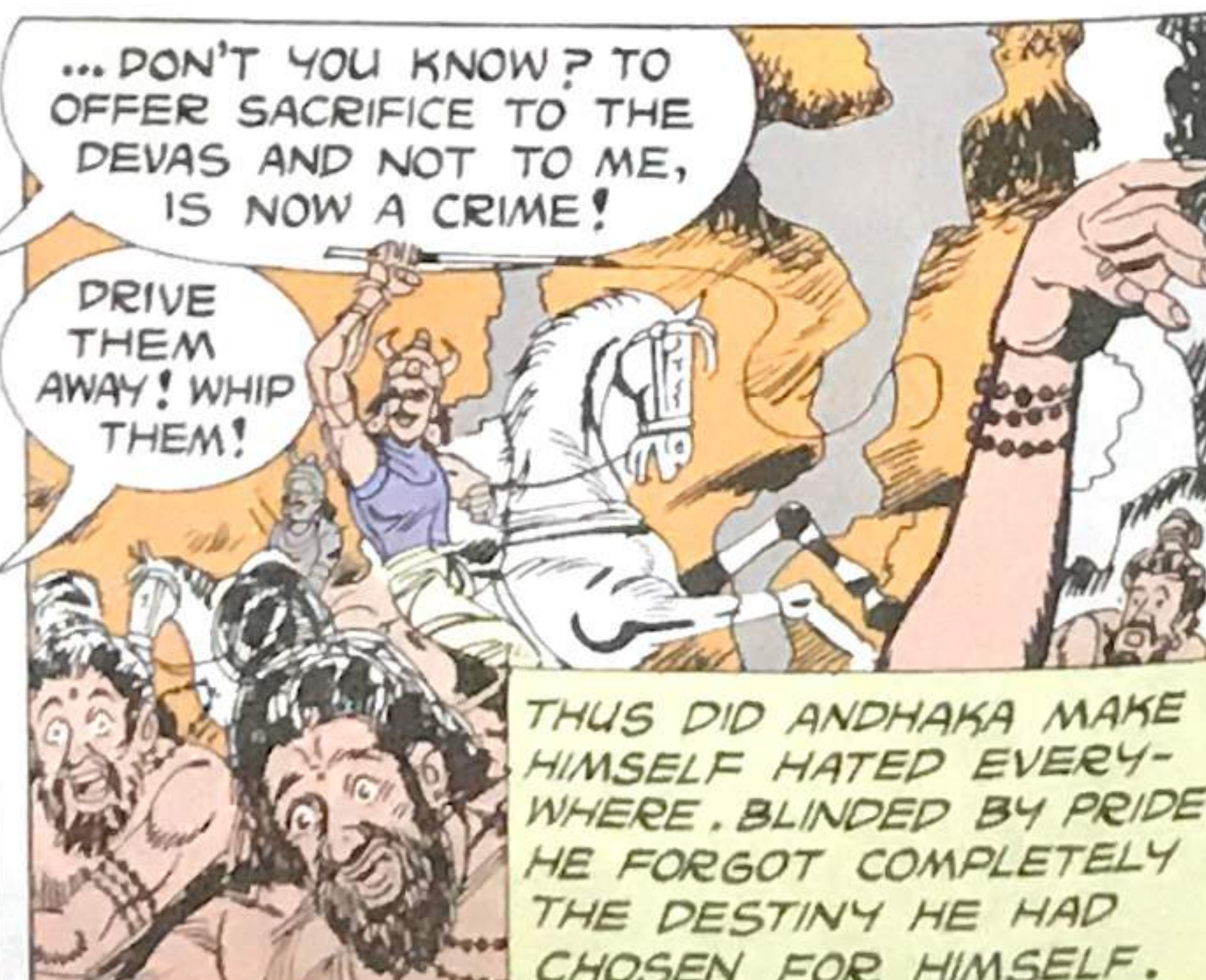
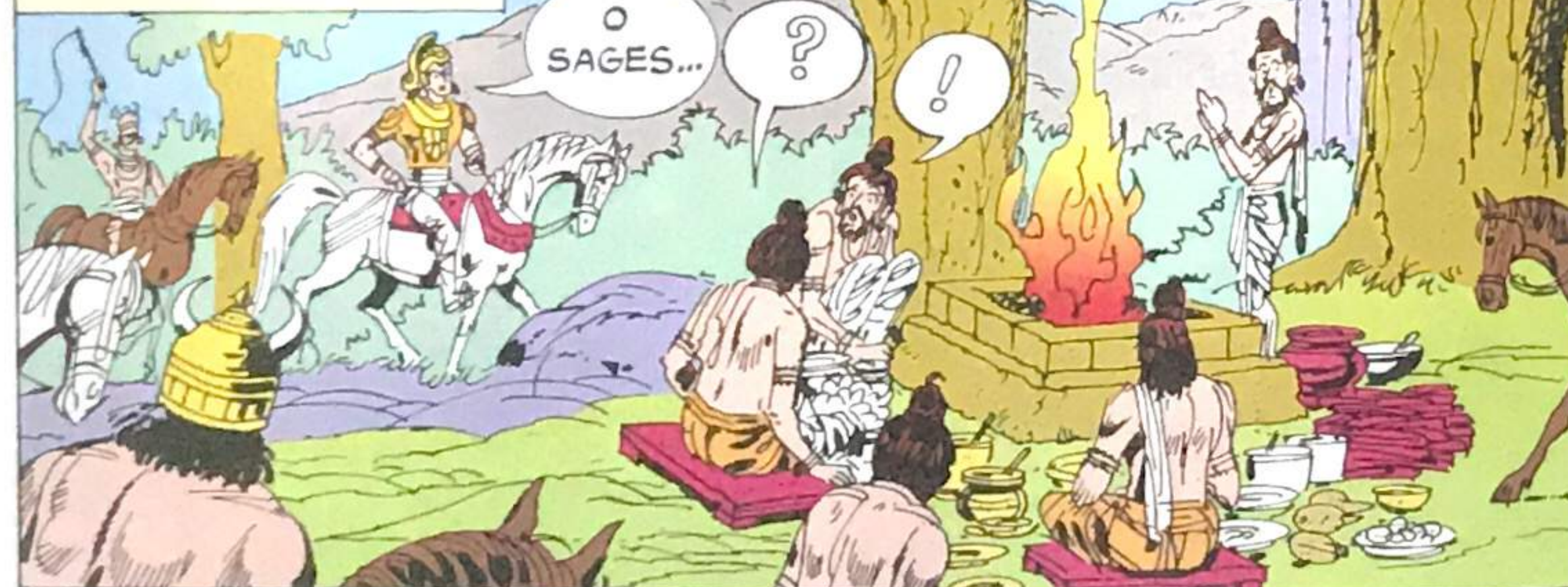


ANDHAKA WAS NOW MASTER OVER ALL.

HE ABANDONED HIMSELF TO A LIFE OF INDOLENCE AND PLEASURE; AND THIS DISSOLUTE LIFE SPENT IN THE MIDST OF BAD COMPANIONS SPURRED HIM TO GREATER EVIL.



HE AND HIS FRIENDS BEGAN TO FREQUENT SITES OF SACRIFICE.



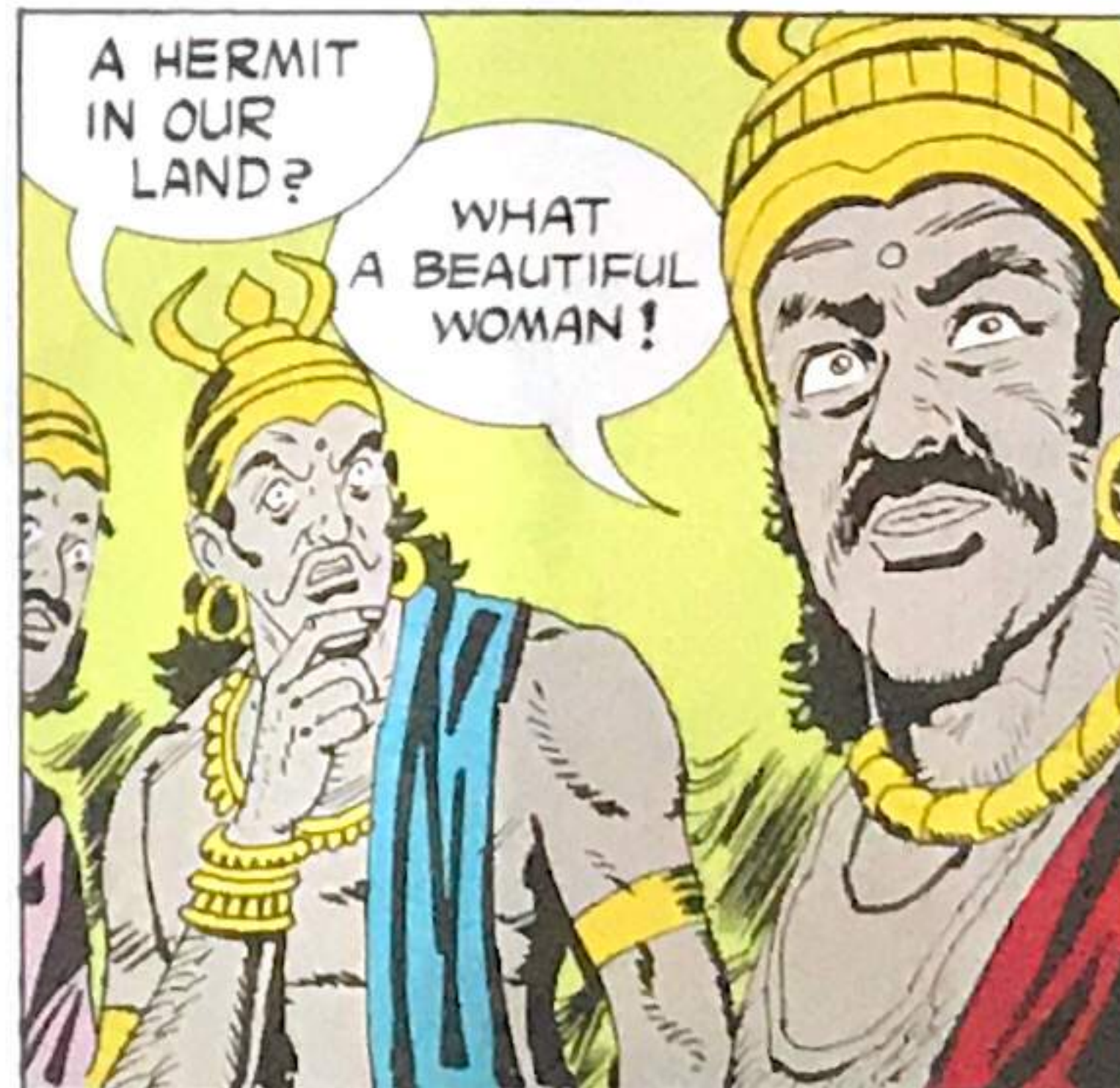
THUS DID ANDHAKA MAKE HIMSELF HATED EVERYWHERE. BLINDED BY PRIDE, HE FORGOT COMPLETELY THE DESTINY HE HAD CHOSEN FOR HIMSELF.

ONCE, HE HAPPENED TO COME TO THE MANDARA MOUNTAIN.

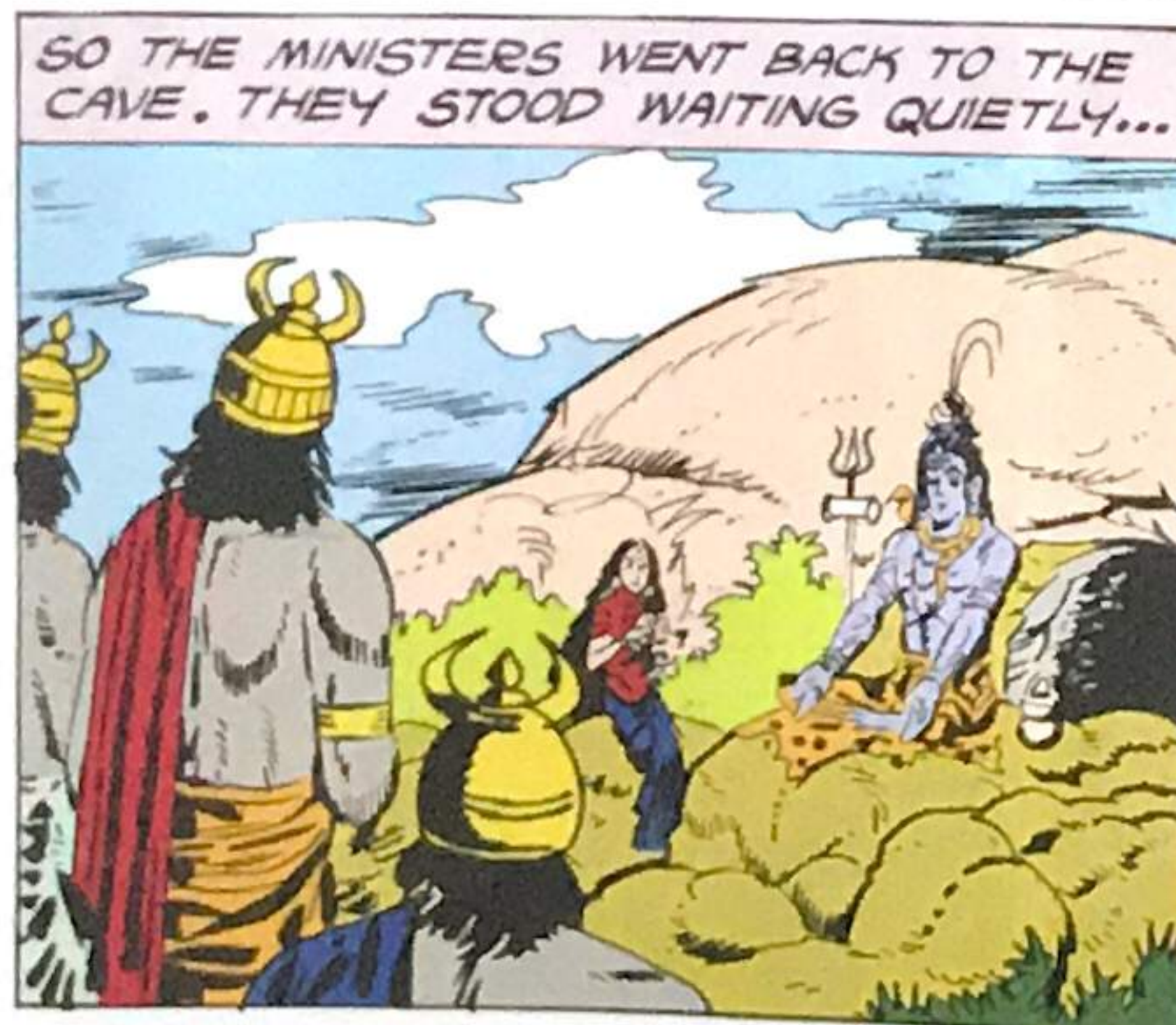


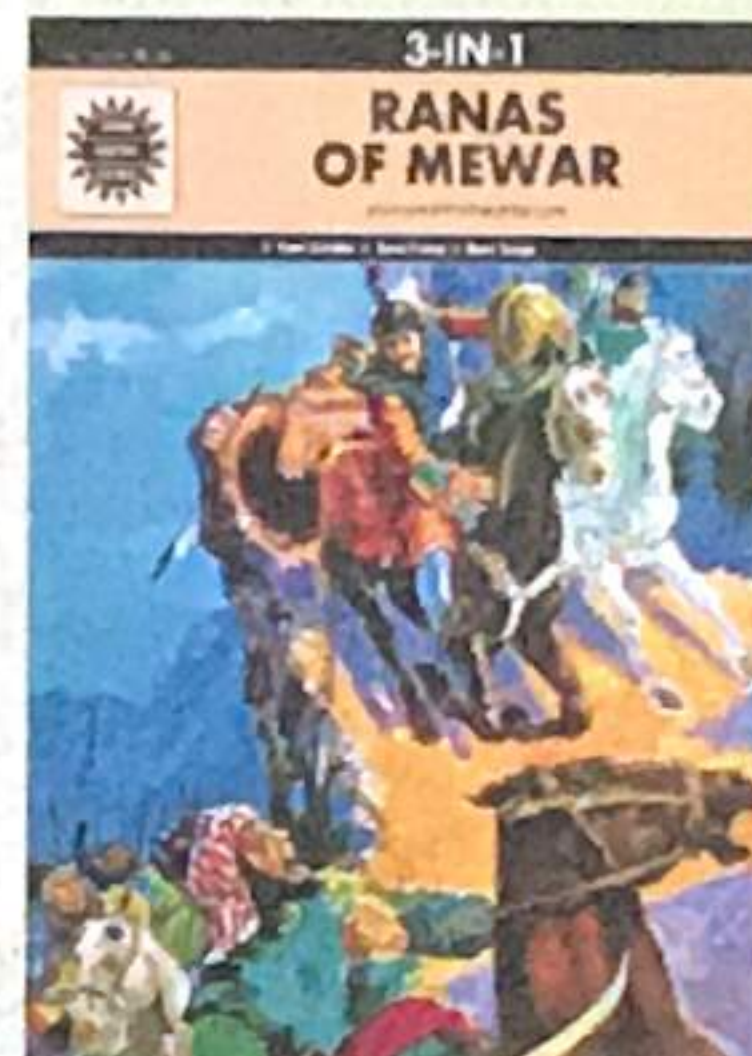
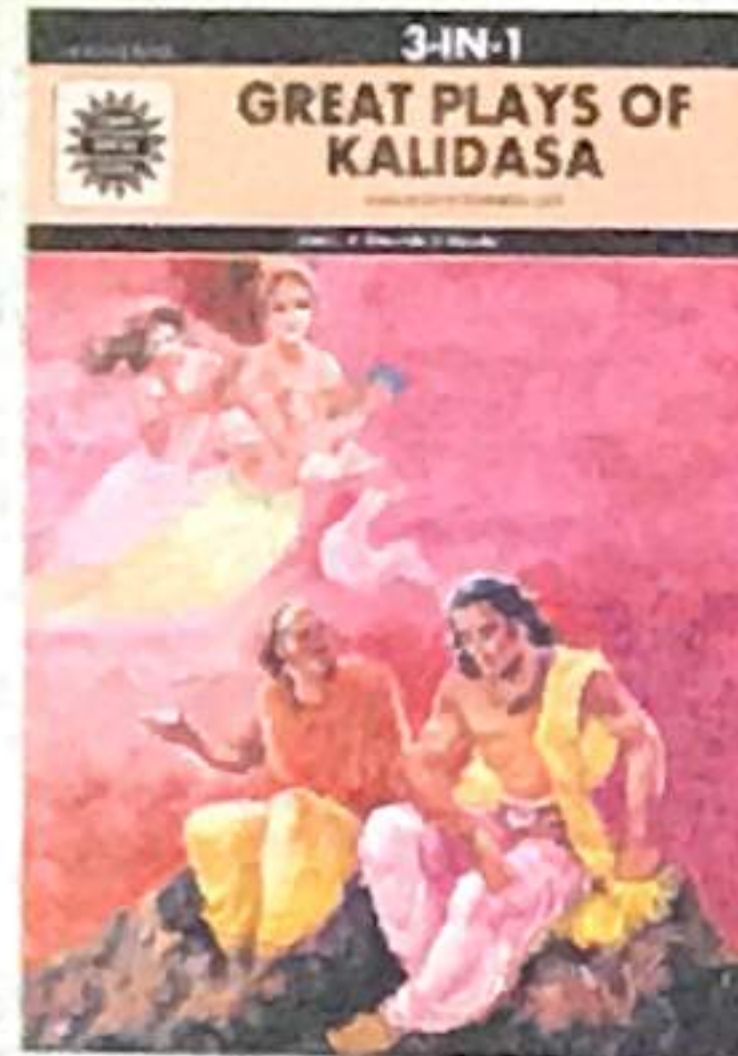
AND AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT, HE DECIDED TO SETTLE THERE.

ONE DAY WHILE EXPLORING THE MANDARA, ANDHAKA'S MINISTERS, DURYODHANA, VAIDHASA AND HASTI CAME UPON A STRANGE SIGHT.

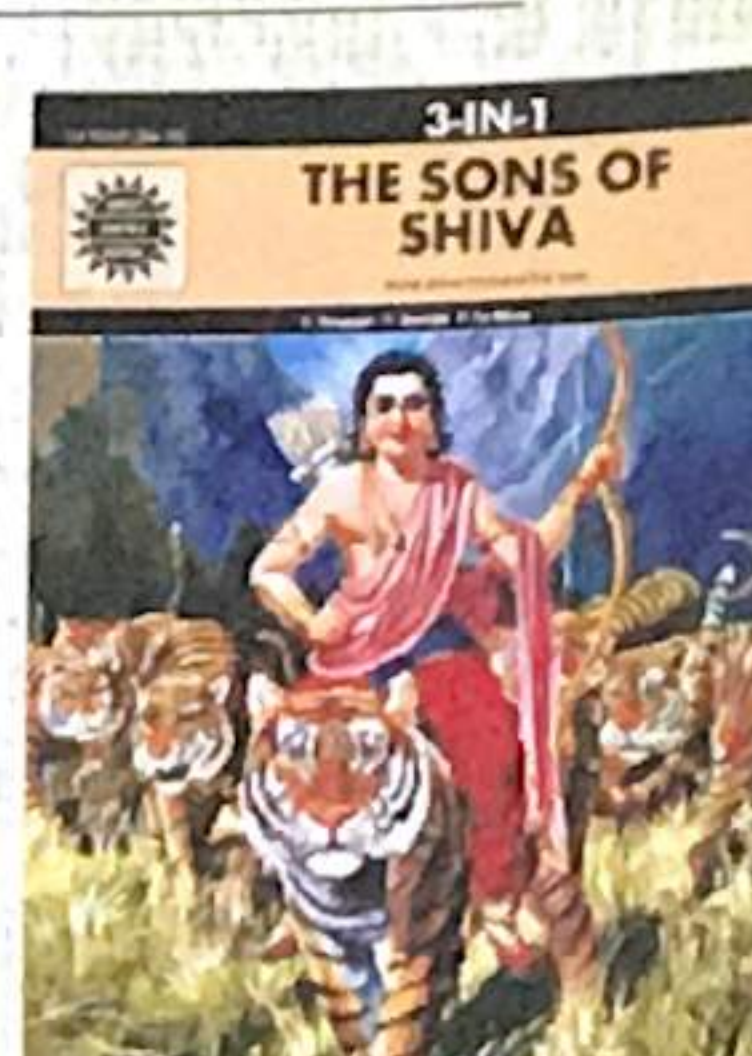
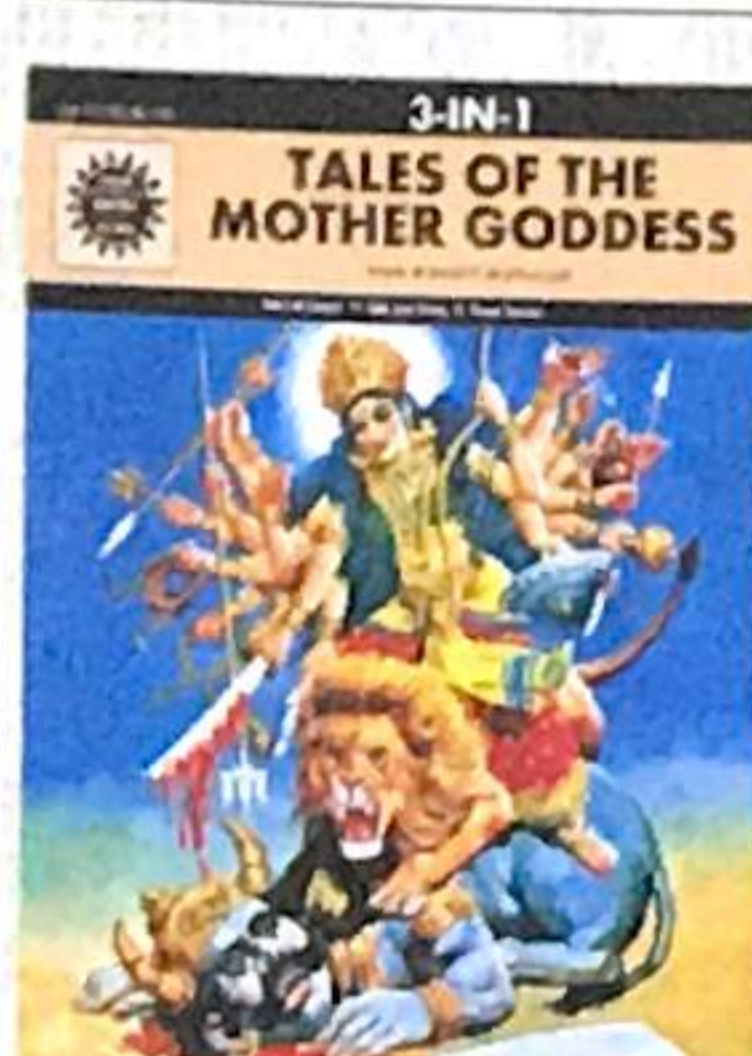
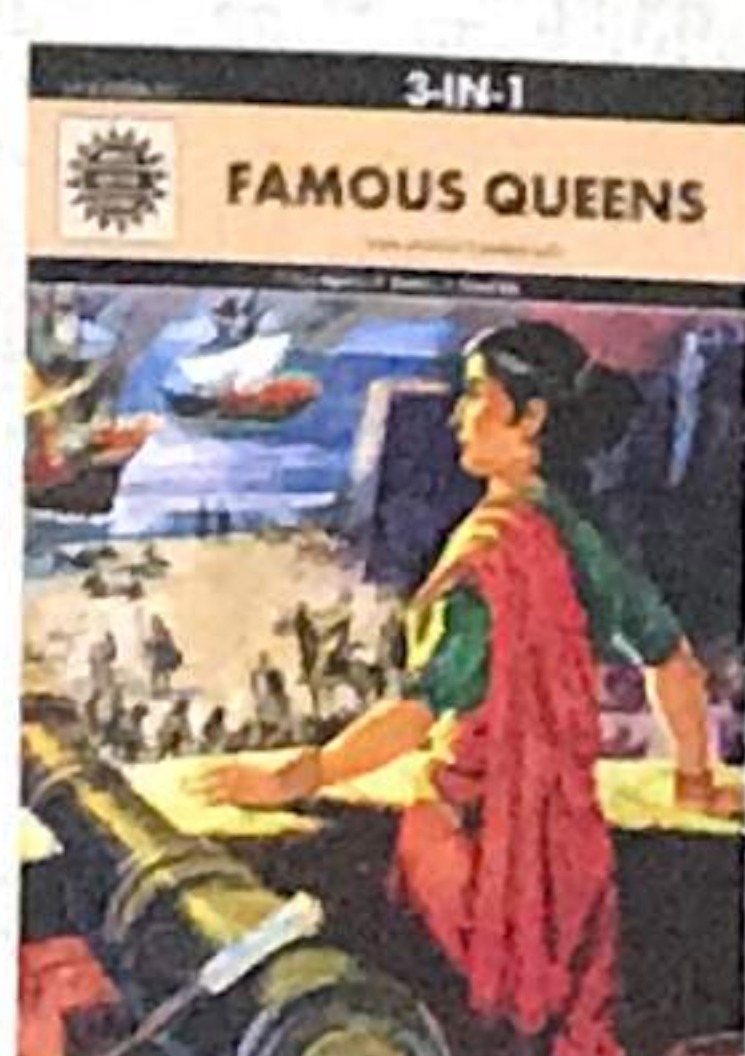
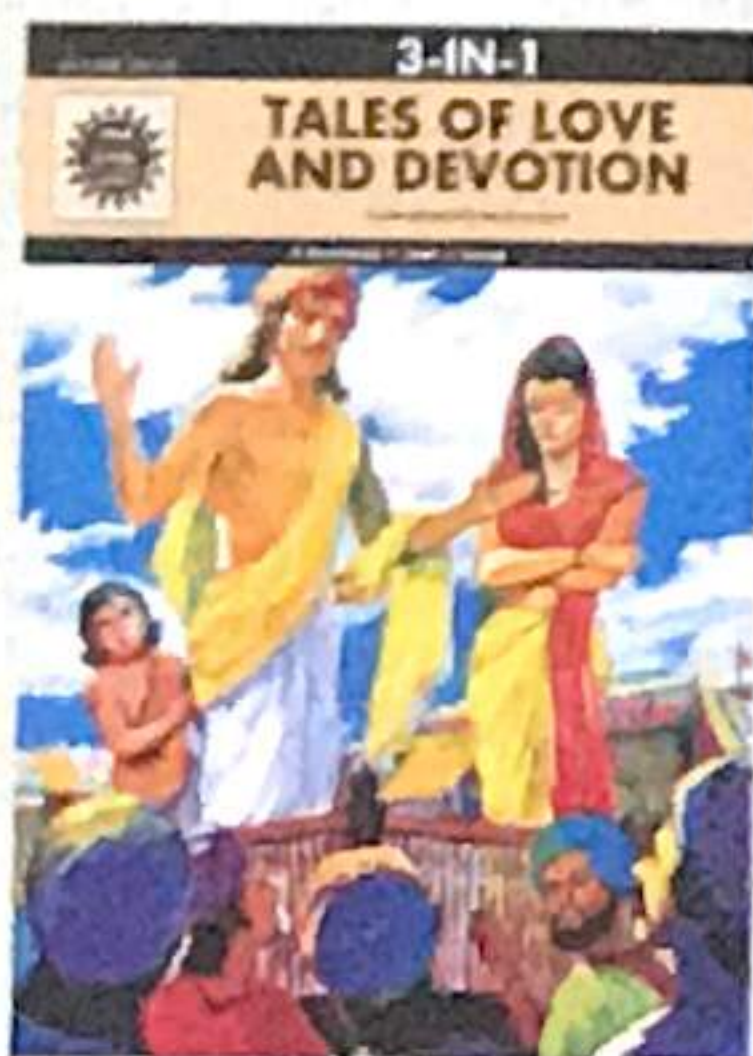
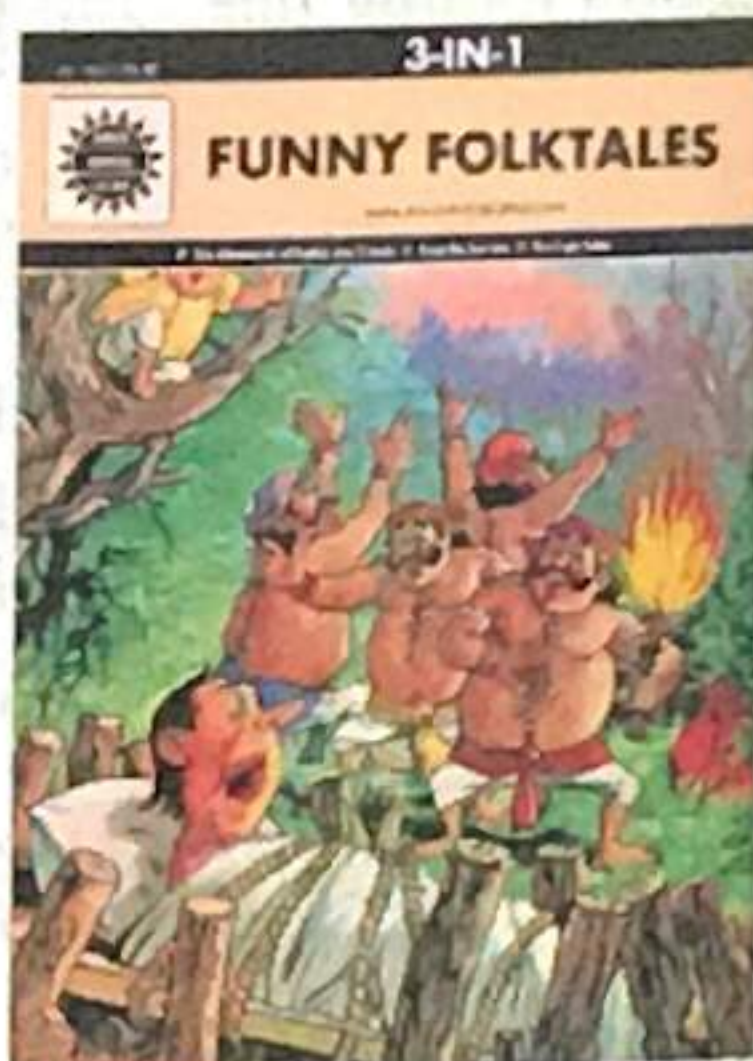


WHAT ARE THEY DOING HERE?
OUR KING MUST HEAR ABOUT HER!





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THE MINISTERS RETURNED WITH SHIVA'S MESSAGE AND DELIVERED IT TO ANDHAKA.

WE ADVISE YOU TO PUT HIM IN HIS PLACE AT ONCE.

ANDHAKA BLAZED UP IN ANGER LIKE FIRE FED WITH GHEE.

YES, I WILL ATTACK THAT CRUDE HERMIT. LET HIM KNOW WHO ANDHAKA IS!

ANDHAKA SET OUT FOR THE MOUNTAIN CAVE.

AS HE APPROACHED ITS ENTRANCE...

I AM VIRAKA—MY MASTER'S GUARD. WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT HERE?

WHEN ANDHAKA IGNORED THE QUESTION AND ADVANCED...



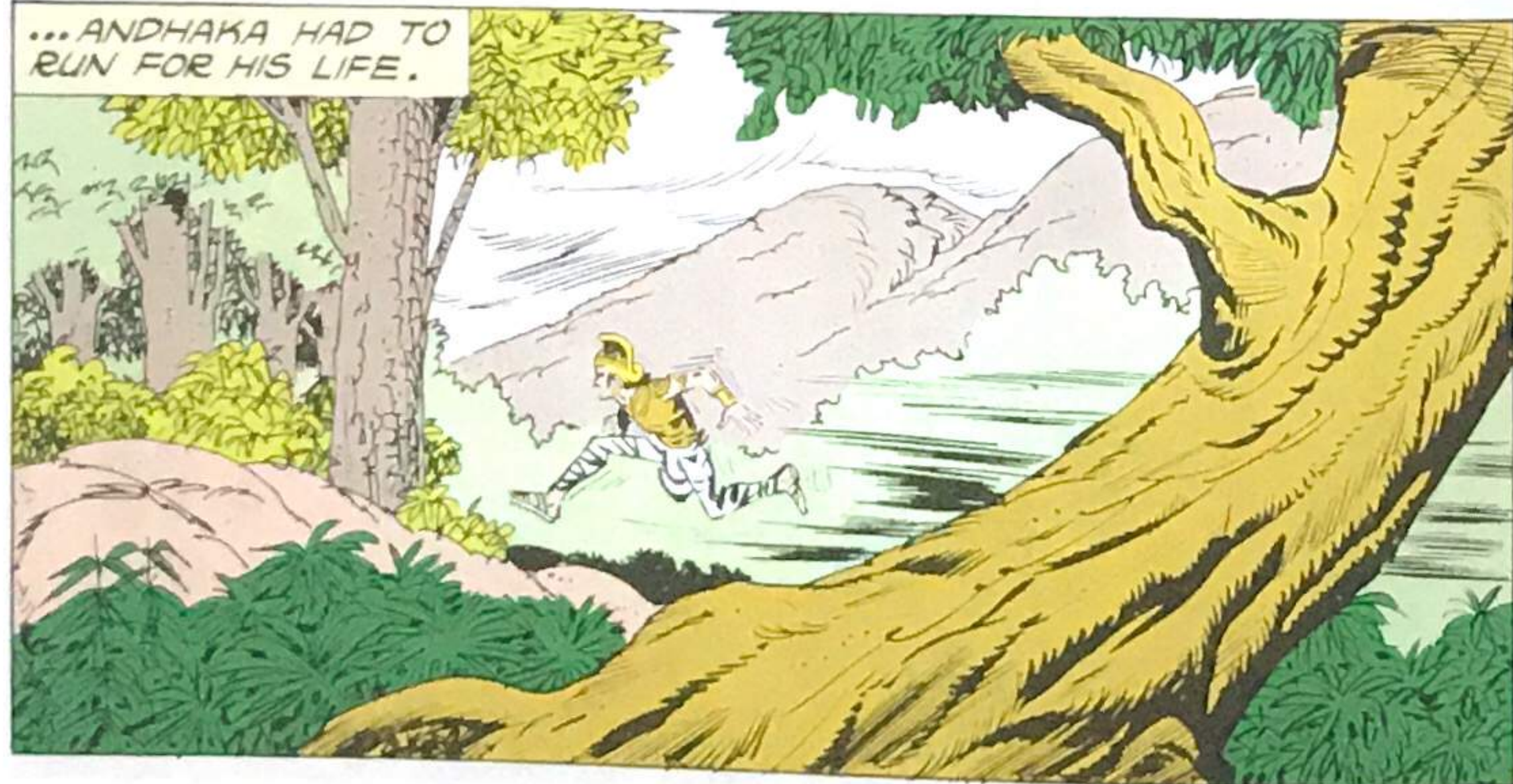
...VIRAKA ATTACKED.



HIS SHOWER OF MISSILES WAS SO DEADLY THAT...



...ANDHAKA HAD TO RUN FOR HIS LIFE.



SOME TIME LATER AT THE CAVE...



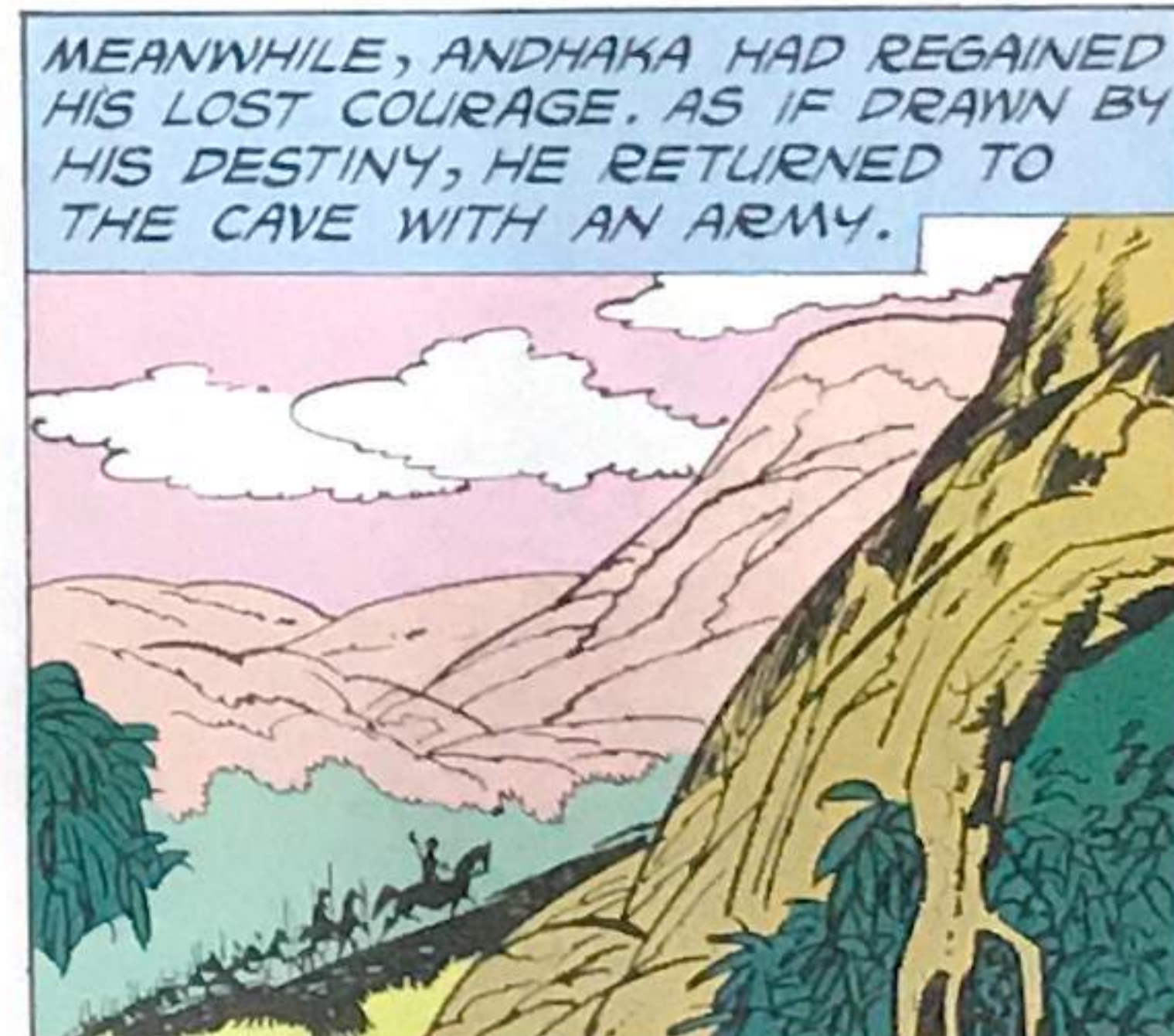
DEAR ONE, I SEE FEAR AND SORROW IN YOUR EYES.

I AM GOING AWAY TO PERFORM THE MOST SEVERE AUSTERITIES TO FREE YOU FROM THEM. VIRAKA WILL STAND GUARD OVER YOU WHEN I AM AWAY.



AND SHIVA LEFT.

MEANWHILE, ANDHAKA HAD REGAINED HIS LOST COURAGE. AS IF DRAWN BY HIS DESTINY, HE RETURNED TO THE CAVE WITH AN ARMY.



A GREAT STRUGGLE ENSUED ONCE AGAIN WITH VIRAKA.



FELL THE WRETCH! FELL HIM!

THIS TIME, IT WAS VIRAKA WHO COLLAPSED, ALMOST BURIED UNDER A HUGE PILE OF WEAPONS.



AHA! NOW TO GET HOLD OF HER!

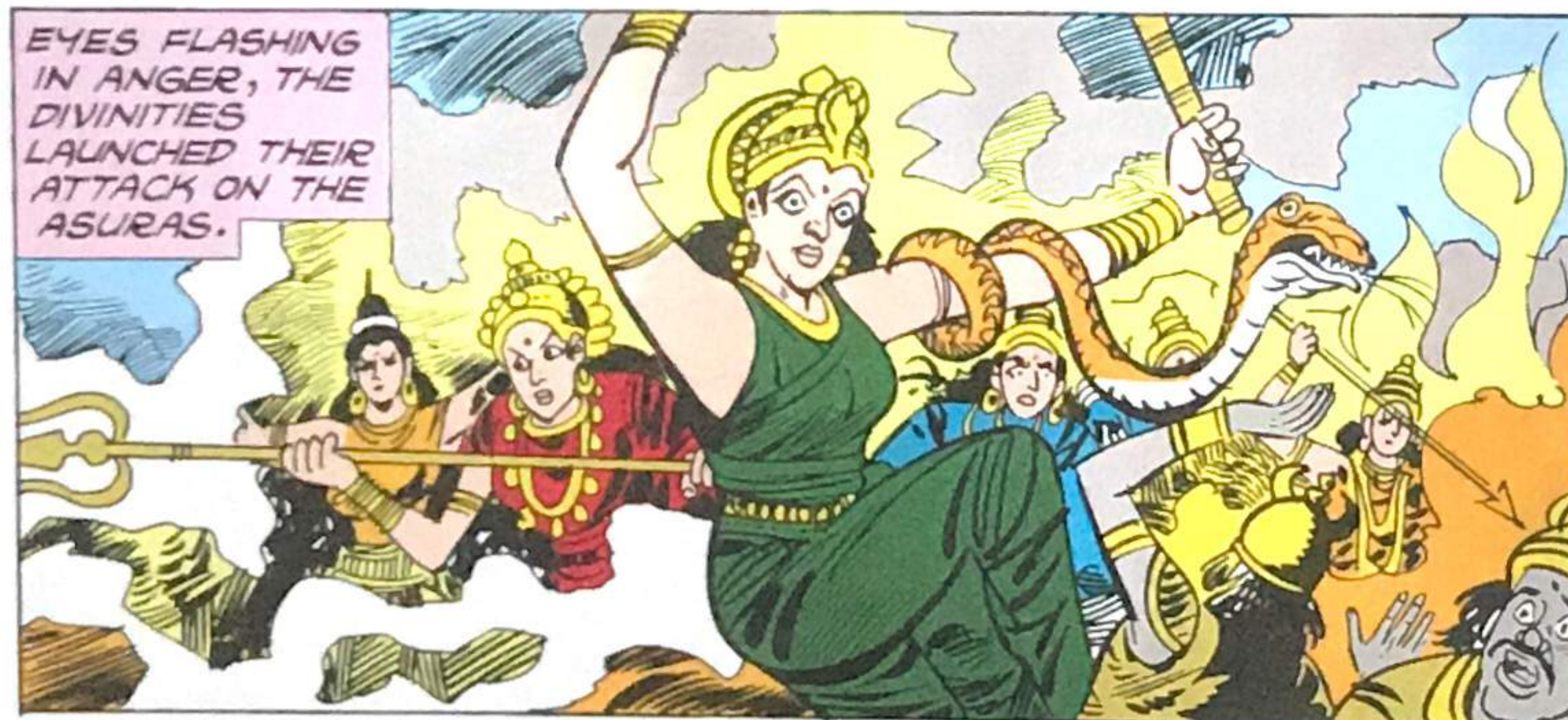


O BRAHMA,
VISHNU, INDRA!
COME TO MY
RESCUE.



AT ONCE, THOSE DIVINE BEINGS ARRIVED
THERE, AS THEY WERE ENTERING PARVATI'S
PRIVATE ABODE, THEY CAME IN FEMALE
FORMS.

DO NOT
WORRY, O PARVATI.
WE ARE BY YOUR
SIDE NOW.



EYES FLASHING
IN ANGER, THE
DIVINITIES
LAUNCHED THEIR
ATTACK ON THE
ASURAS.



THEY SENT FORTH MIGHTY
STREAMS OF ENERGY,
BELABOURING ANDHAKA
AND HIS MEN.



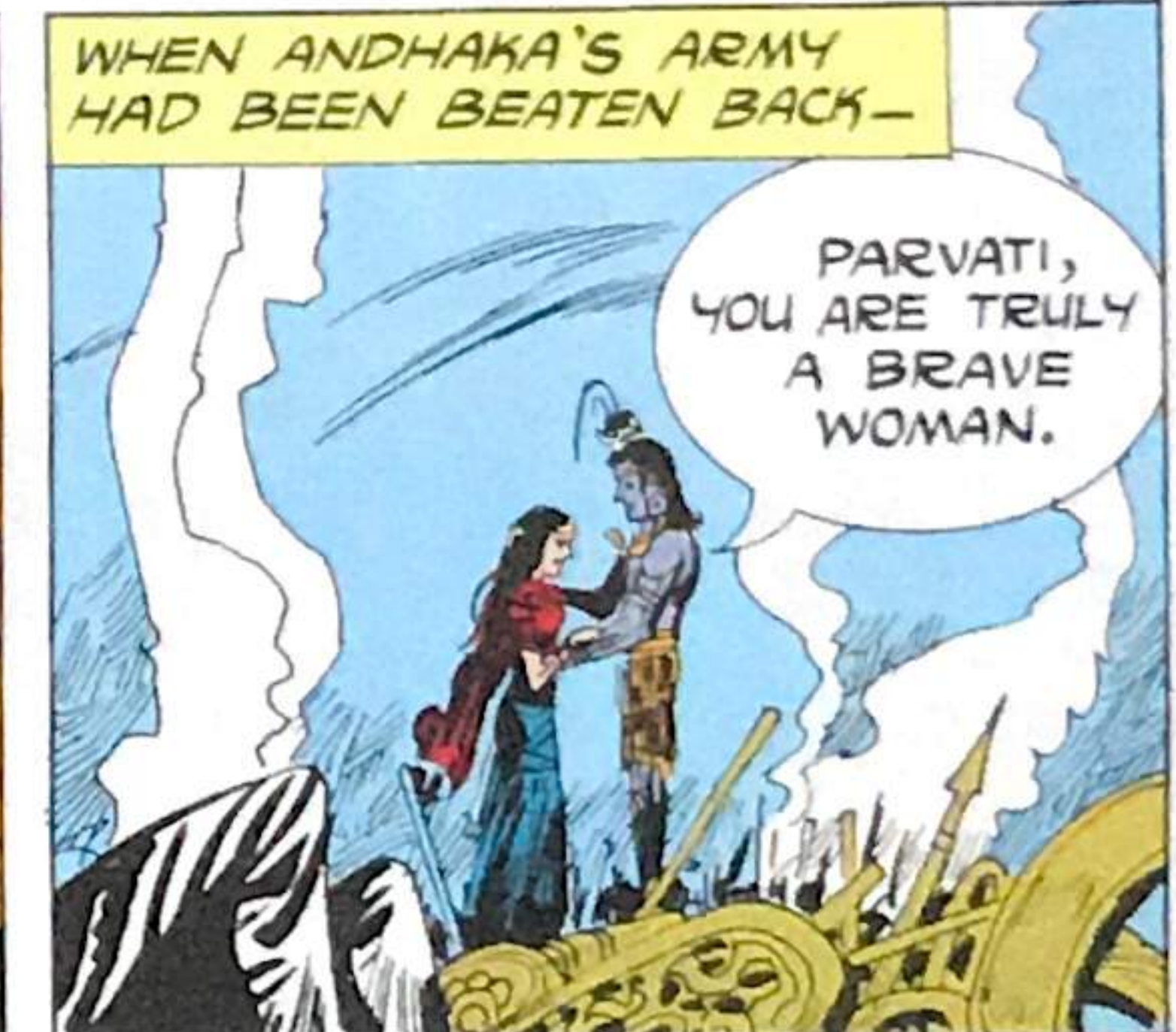
ANDHAKA'S ARMY UNDER THE
GENERAL, GILA, FOUGHT BACK
BUT IT WAS A LOSING BATTLE.



THEN BLAZING FORTH LIKE
A THOUSAND SUNS, SHIVA
HIMSELF CAME THERE.



THE HAPPY PARVATI FOUGHT EVEN
MORE VALIANTLY TO PROVE HER
SKILL AND COURAGE TO HER LORD.



WHEN ANDHAKA'S ARMY
HAD BEEN BEATEN BACK—

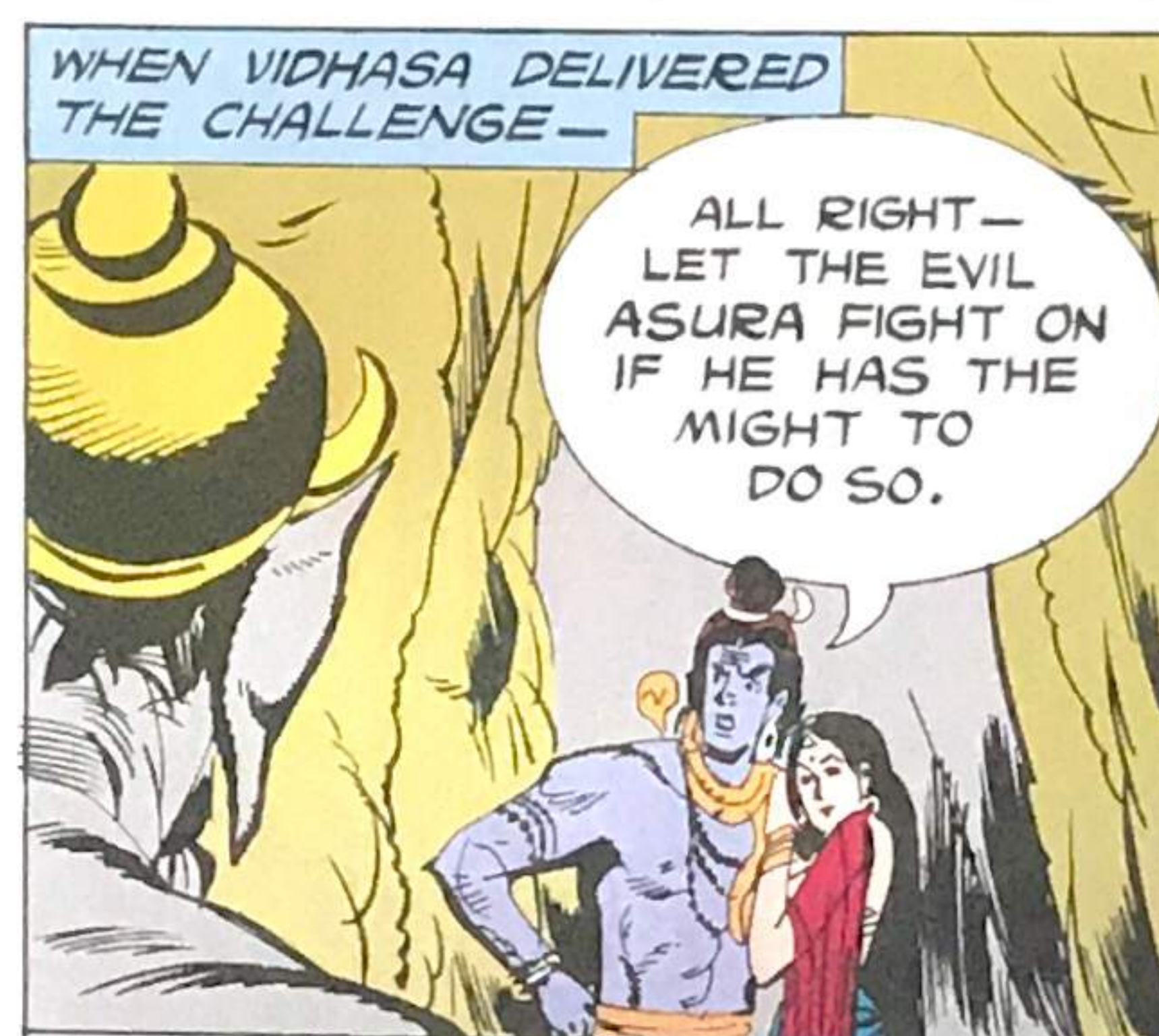
PARVATI,
YOU ARE TRULY
A BRAVE
WOMAN.



IT
WAS THEIR
PRESENCE AND
HELP THAT
MADE ME
BRAVE.



YOU, TOO,
VIRAKA, WERE
NO LESS
VALIANT.



SHIVA BEGAN TO LAUGH. LIGHT RADIATED FROM HIM...



...AND SPREAD OVER THE WHOLE MANDARA REGION.



SHIVA'S RESPLENDENT FORM CHARGED VIRAKA WITH FRESH VIGOUR. HE WENT BACK TO FACE VIDHASA.



BUT THE ASURA SWALLOWED HIM AS WELL.

OH, NO! HOW WILL MY MASTER TACKLE THESE EVIL CREATURES ALL ALONE?



BUT VIRAKA NEED NOT HAVE WORRIED, FOR SHIVA WAS OMNIPOTENT. HE RODE UP TO THE ASURA HORDES...



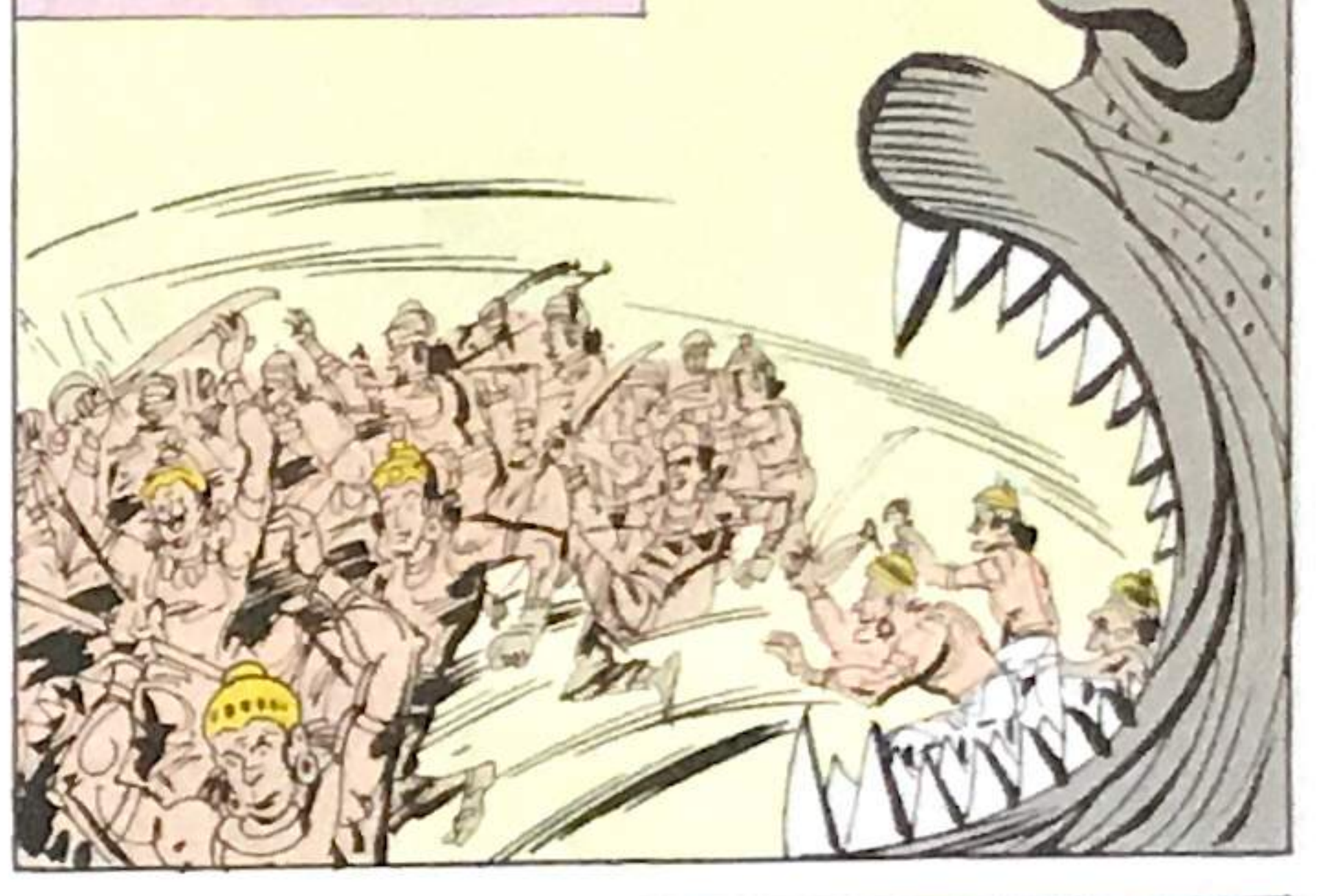
...REPEATING THE CHANT THAT BRINGS ON THE THROWING UP OF WHAT IS SWALLOWED.



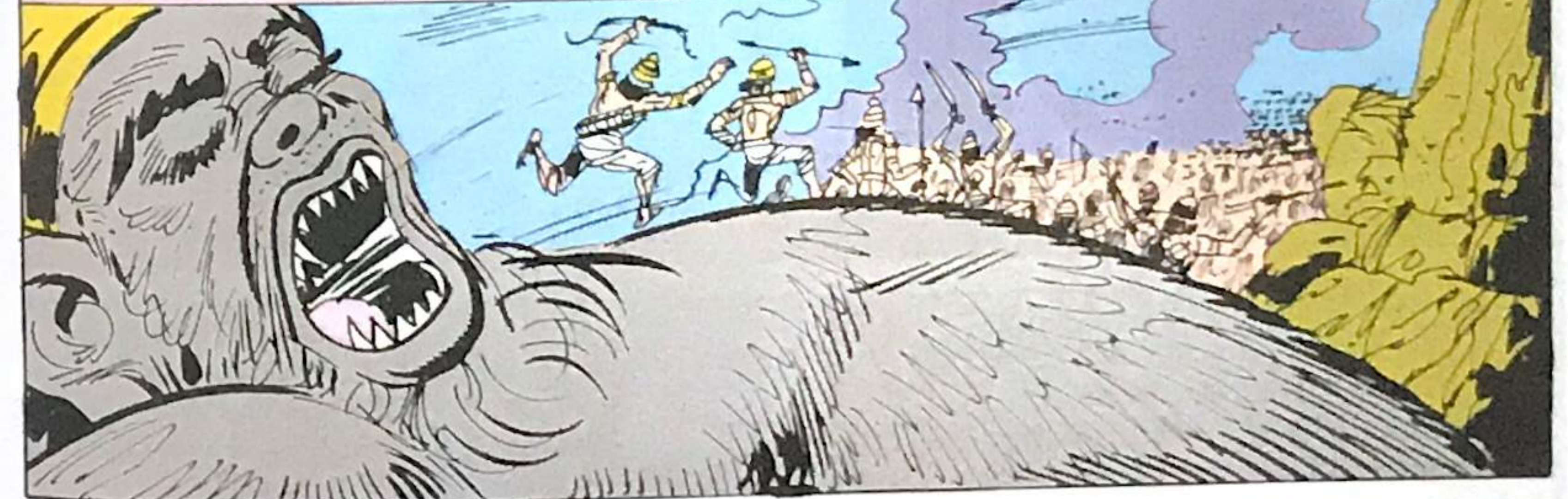
AND SURE ENOUGH, VIDHASA'S MOUTH WAS FORCED OPEN AGAINST HIS WILL...



...AND OUT CAME VIRAKA, FOLLOWED BY THE DEVAS.



THEY RESUMED THE BATTLE, WREAKING HAVOC UPON THE STUNNED ASURAS.



FINALLY, ANDHAKA ALONE REMAINED. HIS BODY WAS BATTERED AND BLEEDING, BUT HIS HOPES STILL RAN HIGH.

SHIVA! YOU ARE NOT FINISHED WITH ME AS YET. BEWARE, O WRETCH, OF ANDHAKA'S MIGHT!



AND SUDDENLY, MANY ANDHAKAS BEGAN TO RISE UP EVERYWHERE FROM THE ASURA'S DRIPPING BLOOD.



THEY ATTACKED SHIVA AND THE DEVAS.



BUT SHIVA'S TRIDENT KILLED EVERY ONE OF THEM...



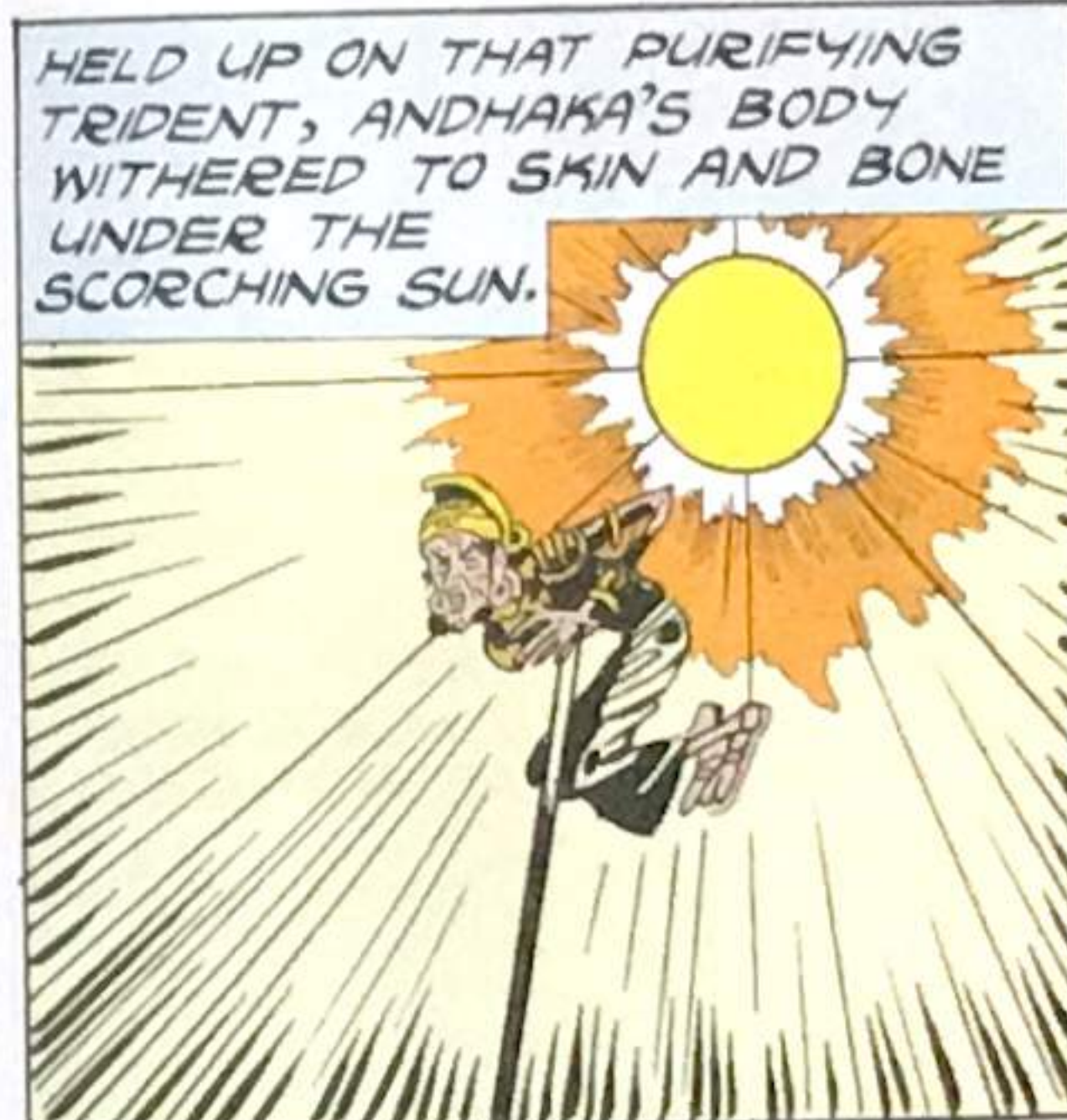
...TILL AT LAST, WITH ALMOST ALL BLOOD SUCKED DRY FROM HIM, THE REAL ANDHAKA ALONE STOOD BEFORE SHIVA.



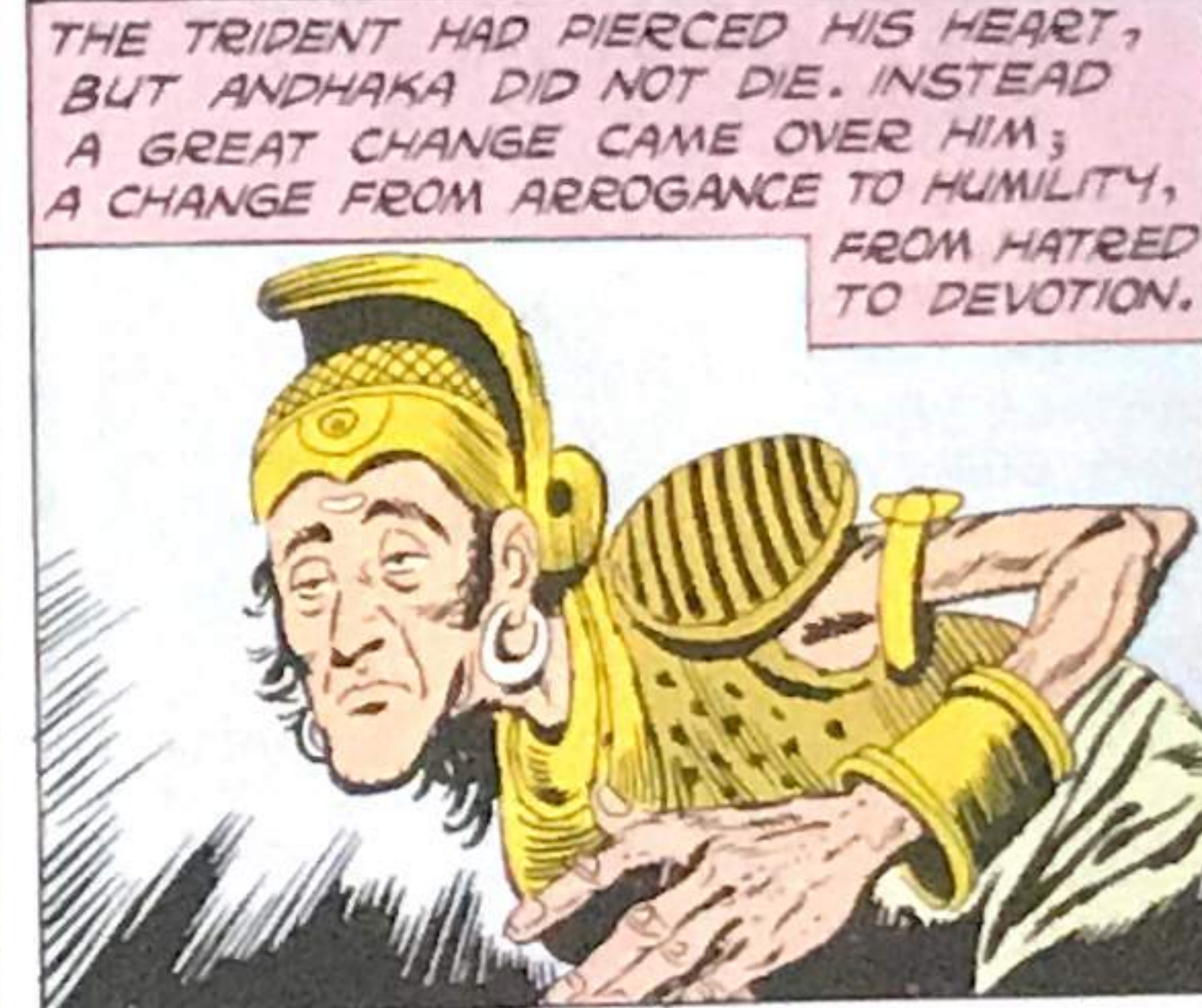
IN ONE MOVEMENT, SHIVA PIERCED HIS TRIDENT INTO THE ASURA AND HELD IT ALOFT.



HELD UP ON THAT PURIFYING TRIDENT, ANDHAKA'S BODY WITHERED TO SKIN AND BONE UNDER THE SCORCHING SUN.



THE TRIDENT HAD PIERCED HIS HEART, BUT ANDHAKA DID NOT DIE. INSTEAD A GREAT CHANGE CAME OVER HIM; A CHANGE FROM ARROGANCE TO HUMILITY, FROM HATRED TO DEVOTION.



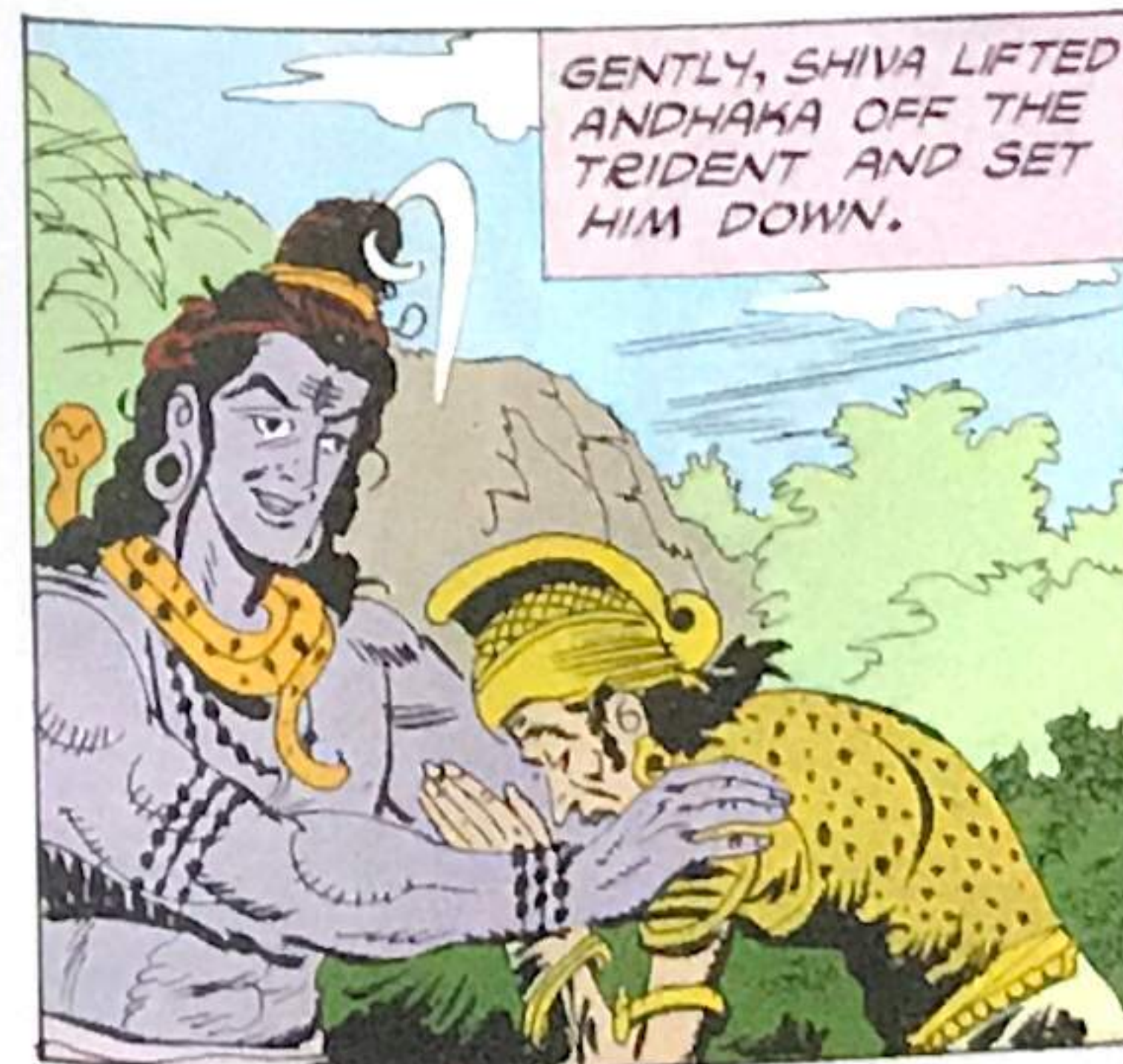
O GREAT LORD OF THE UNIVERSE, DO NOT BE ANGRY WITH ME.



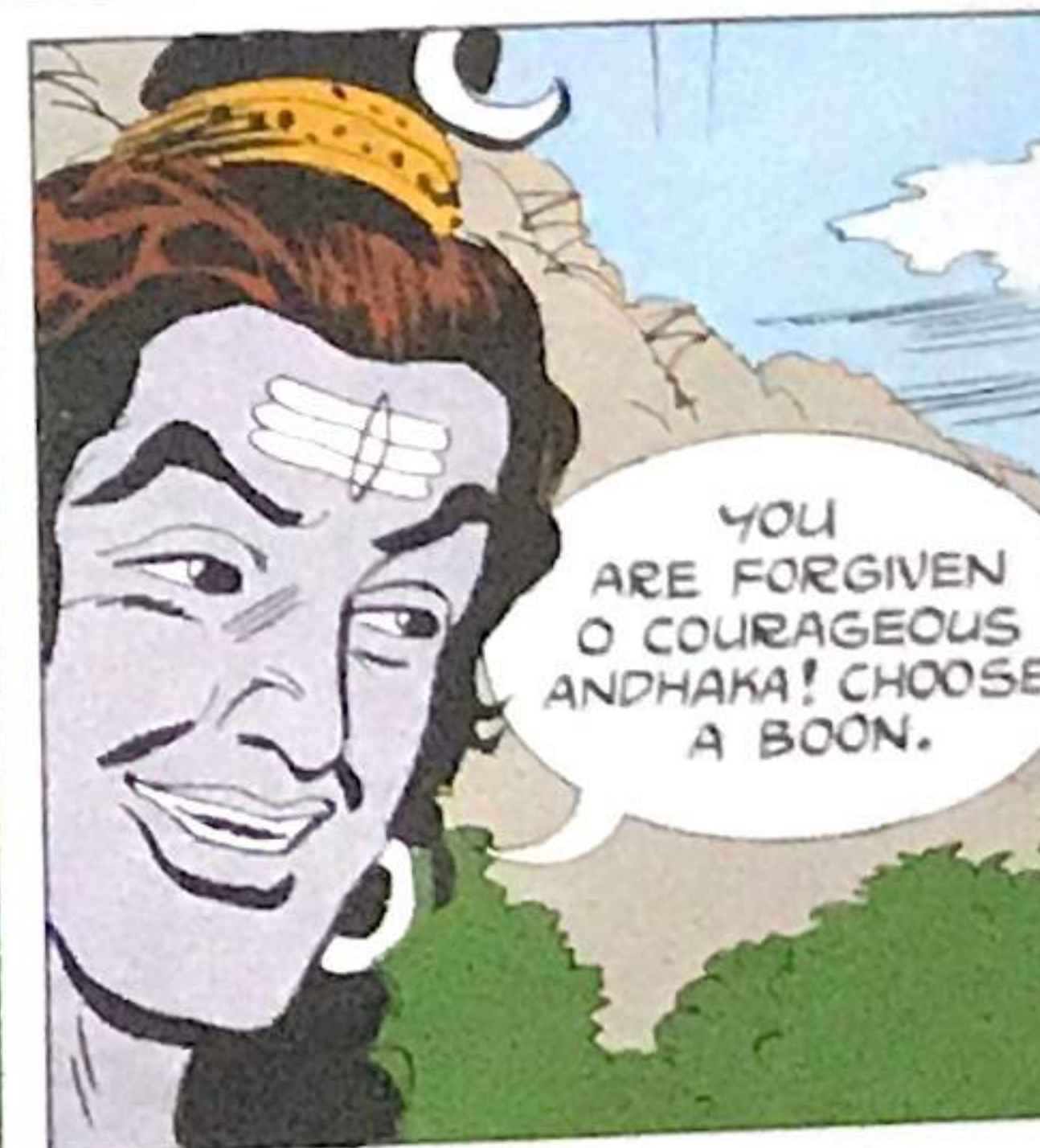
O MOON-CRESTED, ONE WITH THE BLUE THROAT, FORGIVE ME.



GENTLY, SHIVA LIFTED ANDHAKA OFF THE TRIDENT AND SET HIM DOWN.

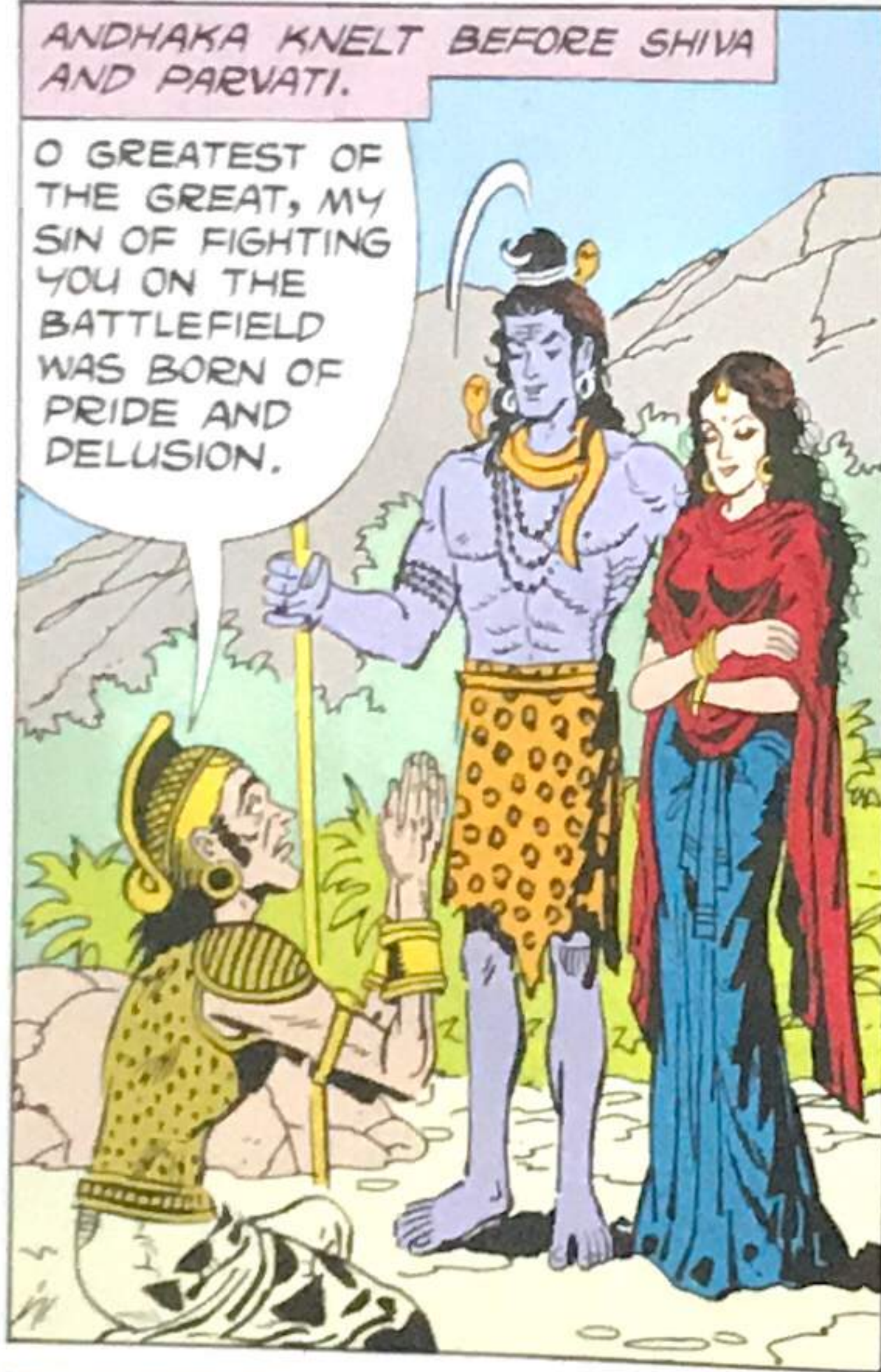


YOU ARE FORGIVEN O COURAGEOUS ANDHAKA! CHOOSE A BOON.



ANDHAKA KNELT BEFORE SHIVA AND PARVATI.

O GREATEST OF THE GREAT, MY SIN OF FIGHTING YOU ON THE BATTLEFIELD WAS BORN OF PRIDE AND DELUSION.



I BESEECH THE MOTHER OF THE UNIVERSE NOT TO BE ANGRY WITH ME, BUT TO LOOK ON ME WITH COMPASSION. LET ME SEE HER ALWAYS AS MOTHER.



LET ME STAY WITH YOUR GANAS. I ASK TO BE YOUR DEVOTEE FOR ETERNITY.

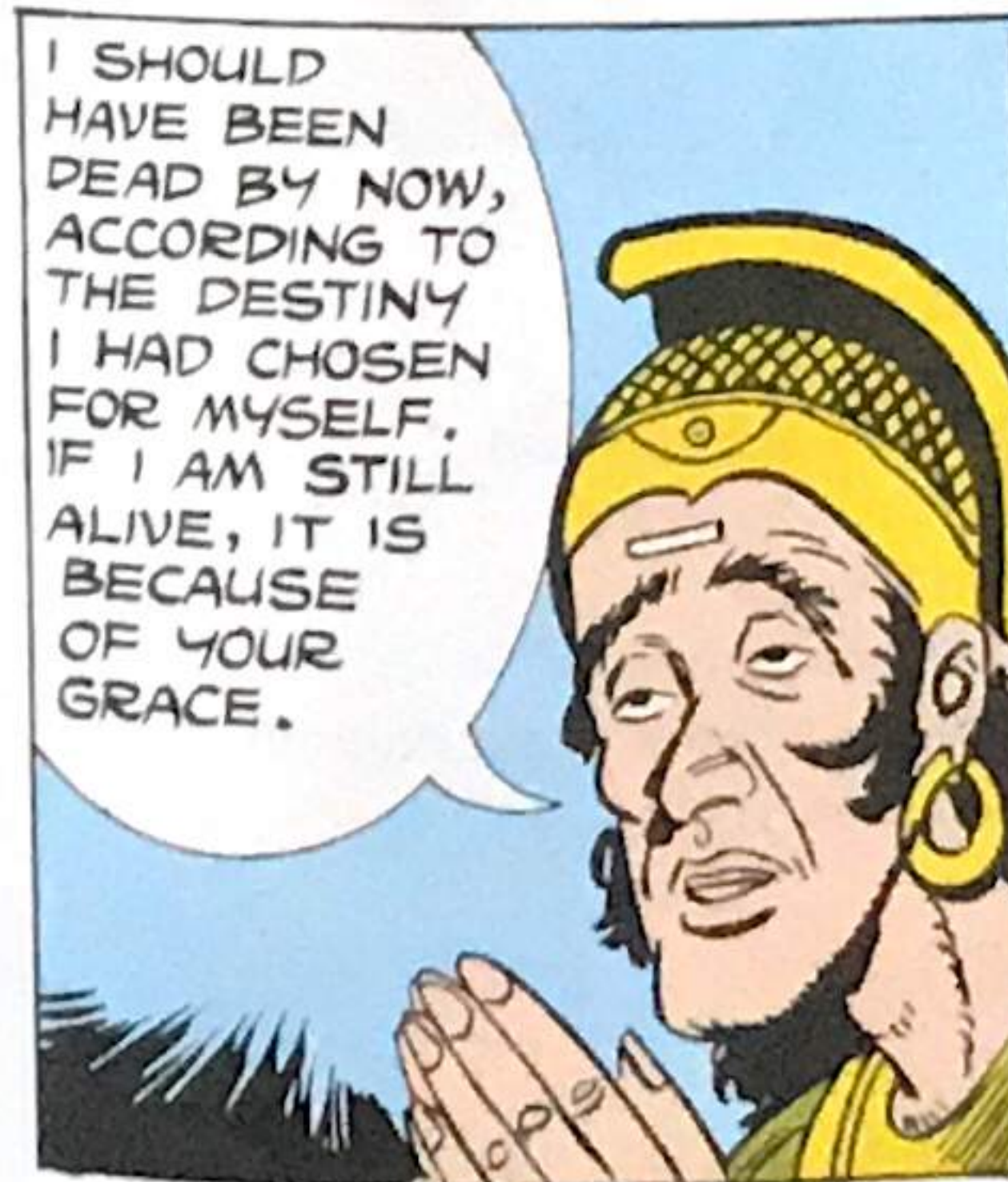
I GRANT YOU ALL THIS, ANDHAKA.



THEN SHIVA MERELY TURNED HIS BENEVOLENT GLANCE UPON ANDHAKA AND ANDHAKA REMEMBERED THE FULL STORY OF HIS BIRTH.



I SHOULD HAVE BEEN DEAD BY NOW, ACCORDING TO THE DESTINY I HAD CHOSEN FOR MYSELF. IF I AM STILL ALIVE, IT IS BECAUSE OF YOUR GRACE.



AND ANDHAKA BOWED BEFORE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND KNEW HAPPINESS AT LAST.

